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ABSTRACT

This book presents 12 strategies (focusing on one strategy a week) for students to increase vocabulary and boost communication skills, suggesting that these techniques can easily double the average person's vocabulary. After an introduction, the book presents the following 12 techniques: (1) "Expand on What You Know: Synonyms, Antonyms, and Homophones"; (2) "Build through Word Structure: Base Words and Prefixes"; (3) "Build through Word Endings: Base Words and Suffixes"; (4) "Find Related Words and Grow"; (5) "Gain Meaning from Context"; (6) "Say Exactly What You Mean"; (7) "Play the Analogies Game"; (8) "Create Word Maps and Word Webs"; (9) "Search for Treasure in Dictionaries and Thesauruses"; (10) "Learn More about Word Structure: Roots and Affixes"; "Discover Latin and Greek Word Families"; and (12) "Take a Foreign Tour: Words from Other Languages." An epilogue, "Keep Building Your Vocabulary: An Ongoing Process," is attached. (RS)

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Building a STRONG Vocabulary

A 12 WEEK PLAN for students

Carl B. Smith, Ph.D.

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A Twelve-Week Plan for Students

Carl B. Smith, Ph.D.

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EDINFO Press

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Introduction

Building Vocabulary for Success

By focusing on one area—vocabulary—can you

- raise your IQ,
- boost your success in school, and
- improve your job opportunities in the future?

The answer is *yes*! Although many things are involved in reaching your goals, studies have shown that IQ test scores, school grades, and job success are closely linked to vocabulary.

These studies should not surprise us. Ideas are expressed with words. The more words you have at your fingertips, the more precise you can be in communicating your ideas to others. In school and in the business world, you are usually evaluated on your ability to express yourself clearly. For jobs in an increasingly information-intense society, the demand for precise expression will increase.

Building vocabulary, then, becomes the most concrete means you have to improve your ability to express your ideas clearly. By sharpening your vocabulary skills, you gain control over school subjects, workplace issues, and the world of ideas in general. That's why the strategies in this book are so important!

Double Your Vocabulary

Each of the techniques discussed on the following pages can help you expand your vocabulary, and taken altogether they can easily double the average person's vocabulary.

If we were to boil this book down into one word, it would be *curiosity*. Set your mind to become more curious about words, their meanings, their power, and their ability to give you control over the world of information.

Why don't you talk with your teachers and ask for advice on ways to connect vocabulary development in school with the informal work done at home? You will probably find that many of the techniques used in this book are also used in the classroom.

Extensive reading provides the best way to build a rich vocabulary. By reading every day, using the techniques in this book, and working with teachers, you can greatly increase your vocabulary skills. The combination of your curiosity and these skills will ensure significant dividends now and in the future.

How to Use This Book

One Skill a Week

1. This book is organized so that you can focus on one word-building skill each week.

Do you have to spend a week on each skill? No, but we think a week on each one makes it manageable. We all learn best if we do a little each day. Then end the week with a quick checkup, using the activities that are provided.

2. Talk with a partner. Words need to be used to become part of your vocabulary.

Explore new words and practice using them with a friend or a parent. Let them work with you and let them learn with you. Your parents will be impressed with your newfound word power.

3. Start a vocabulary notebook. It takes only a few minutes a day.

4. Become aware of words. Learn to play with them.

Week 1

Expand on What You Know

Synonyms, Antonyms and Homonyms

> Always use words you already know; then search for synonyms and antonyms.

We will begin this first week by looking at ways to build your vocabulary by searching your memory.

A. Synonyms and Antonyms: Words That Mean the Same, Words That Mean the Opposite

Synonyms are groups of words that have the same or almost the same meaning. For example, *big*, *large*, *huge*, and *enormous* are closely related in meaning.

Antonyms are words that have opposite meanings. For example, *big* and *little* mean the opposite, as do *fast* and *slow* or *up* and *down*.

These two terms suggest ways of organizing words into logical groupings:

- Synonyms are related by their *similarity* of meaning.
- Antonyms stand in *contrast* to one another.

Synonyms and antonyms can also help to define unfamiliar words. When we encounter a new word, we can often understand it more fully if we relate it to a familiar word whose meaning is similar or is the opposite. For example, if someone makes a *colossal* mistake, it is not just a *big* mistake; it is *huge*, *enormous*, or even *gigantic*. Furthermore, something that is *colossal* is the opposite of *small*, *tiny*, or *insignificant*.

Here are some examples of familiar synonyms and antonyms:

Synonyms	**Antonyms**
start, begin	off - on
sad, unhappy	up - down
odd, unusual	stop - start
ask, request	slow - fast
answer, reply	bright - dark
calm, still	light - heavy
jump, leap	question - answer

Look for synonyms and antonyms as you read, and select those that you would like to pay attention to.

……

List some other pairs of synonyms and antonyms as you find them in your reading.

Synonyms		**Antonyms**	
__________	__________	__________	__________
__________	__________	__________	__________
__________	__________	__________	__________
__________	__________	__________	__________
__________	__________	__________	__________

……

Putting Synonyms to Work

The search for synonyms and antonyms provides an excellent way to increase your vocabulary because it helps you discover several different ways of expressing a single thought or idea. For example, instead of just saying "I was *mad* at him," you might say "I was *angry* (or *furious* or *annoyed* or *exasperated*) at him."

Can you think of different situations in which you would use each word? What would make you *annoyed* but not really angry? What would make you so angry that you would become *furious*?

____

____

____

____

____

Now look at some sentences that tell about different ways of *running*. Notice that each sentence uses a different verb which is exactly suited to its specific situation. We could say that all these verbs are synonyms, but each sentence is much more interesting and precise than it would have been if we had used the word *ran* in every case.

***Synonyms for* ran**—Can you picture the difference?

Two squirrels *scampered* around, looking for acorns.

The chipmunk *skittered* through the dead leaves.

A herd of zebras *loped* across the plain in search of food.

Synonyms and antonyms don't always have to be individual words. For example, if you *like* something, you can say that you *enjoy* or *admire* it, but you can also say that you *find it agreeable* or you *are fond of it* or you *are partial to it*. These are all synonyms; it's just that some of them are longer, more elaborate ways of saying that you *like* something.

Keep a vocabulary notebook. Write synonyms and antonyms every time you are searching for just the right word.

• •

Look back over this section on synonyms and antonyms. Which words do you want to keep in your notebook?

____________________ ____________________

____________________ ____________________

____________________ ____________________

____________________ ____________________

____________________ ____________________

____________________ ____________________

B. Homophones: Words That Sound the Same

In English there are many sets of words that have the same sound but that have different spellings and meanings: *here* and *hear* or *to*, *too*, and *two*, for example. These groups of words are called **homophones**, which means "the same sound."

As we move from simple homophones to more challenging ones, we encounter new words that sound like more familiar ones: *seen* and *scene* or *complement* and *compliment*, for example.

• •

Use these homophones in sentences of your own.

Have you *seen* my umbrella?

____

We looked out on a *scene* of incredible beauty.

____

This hat will *complement* the rest of your outfit.

____

We should *compliment* her on her excellent performance.

____

• •

Watch Out for Tricky Homophones

Some homophones are more troublesome than others. This is especially true of the words *to*, *too*, and *two*. We can clarify the meanings of these words by looking at the ways in which they are most often used.

To is often used as a *preposition* followed by a noun. It usually means "toward" or "in the direction of something."

Dad gave me a ride *to school* today.

To can also be used before a verb to tell about doing something.

I like *to ride* my skateboard.

Too can mean "more than enough." It is often followed by a word such as *many* or *much*.

Don't try to carry *too many* boxes.

I ate *too much* pizza and got sick.

Too can mean "also" or "in addition." Notice how the commas are used with the word *too* in the following sentences.

These words, *too*, need to be defined more clearly.

When I left for school, my dog wanted to come, *too*.

Two is the spelling for the numeral **2**. It is never used in any other way. When you use this numeral in a sentence, it is usually spelled out.

Two of my friends met me at the game.

We have *two* puppies and *two* kittens.

The words *their*, *there*, and *they're* make up another challenging group of homophones.

> **There** is often used as an adverb that tells *where* something is located. It means "in that place" or "in that direction."
>
> > Look for the ball over *there* in the bushes.
> >
> > We ran *there* to see what had happened.
>
> **There** can also be used to begin a sentence. It is usually followed by a verb such as *is* or *are*.
>
> > *There is* no more milk in the refrigerator.
> >
> > *There are* two more cookies left.
>
> **Their** is a plural possessive noun. It is used to show that something belongs to two or more people or things.
>
> > Two of my friends left *their* books on the bus.
> >
> > These are difficult words. I'm not sure about *their* meanings.
>
> **They're** is a contraction of the words *they are*. The first letter of the verb *are* is dropped and an apostrophe is put in its place. The two words are then joined and pronounced as one.
>
> > *They're* going to the game tomorrow.
> >
> > Do you know if *they're* planning to attend?

Try writing your own sentences using *there*, *their*, and *they're*.

____

____

____

Two other pairs of homophones may also cause trouble if you are not careful.

Its is a possessive pronoun that shows ownership.

The school is proud of *its* team.

The little town finally received *its* new fire truck.

It's is a contraction of the words *it is*.

It's going to be cold today.

Do you know if *it's* eight o'clock yet?

Your is a possessive pronoun that shows ownership.

Be sure to bring *your* own chairs.

Did you forget *your* gloves?

You're is a contraction of the words *you are*.

You're going to be late if you don't leave soon.

I hope *you're* able to find your gloves.

Try writing your own sentences using *its, it's, your,* and *you're.*

____

____

____

____

Familiar Homophones

Here are some of the homophones you encounter fairly often. Can you use each word correctly? Share this activity with your partner. Point to each word and use it in a sentence, or write sentences on a separate piece of paper. You can check each other.

NOTES

ate, eight
bare, bear
base, bass
blew, blue
brake, break

buy, by
flour, flower
hole, whole
hour, our
knew, new

NOTES

knight, night
know, no
one, won
peace, piece
right, write

sail, sale
sea, see
son, sun
waist, waste

wait, weight
way, weigh
weak, week
wood, would
your, you're

More Challenging Homophones

The following homophones may not be quite as familiar as the ones you just saw. Consult your dictionary if you're not sure about the meaning of some of these words. Use each one in a sentence and share your sentences with a partner. Between you, can you give a meaning for each word?

NOTES

aisle, I'll, isle
bolder, boulder
bridal, bridle
cereal, serial

NOTES

choral, coral
chorale, corral
cite, sight, site
coarse, course
complement, compliment

core, corps
council, counsel
dual, duel
foreword, forward
loan, lone
manner, manor
miner, minor
patience, patients

principal, principle
rain, reign, rein
scene, seen
stationary, stationery
vain, vane, vein

When you are reading, notice how these words are used. Also practice writing groups of two or three sentences containing each of these sets of homophones. Your sentences can help you understand these words by providing a context that clarifies each meaning.

In your vocabulary notebook, list the homophones that you want to work on. Write sentences that help you clarify their meanings.

Week 1. **Check Yourself**

Answer the following questions. Use a separate piece of paper when you need more space.

1. Pick some familiar verbs and adjectives and think of as many **synonyms** as you can. Use each word in a sentence. Here are some suggestions:

watch (verb): look at, stare, observe, peep, notice

fast (adjective): speedy, swift, rapid, quick, fleet

2. Pick some familiar adjectives and think of as many **antonyms** as you can. Use each word in a sentence. Here are some suggestions:

good: bad, evil, wicked, corrupt, worthless, false

easy: hard, difficult, laborious, exhausting

3. Look at each of the following sentences and then write another sentence using a **homophone** that matches the sound of the word in italics.

Look *through* these magazines for pictures of giraffes.

______________________________.

How much longer do we have to *wait*?

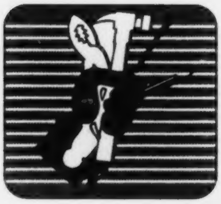
______________________________.

I'd like to take a *course* in jewelry making.

______________________________.

Now think of some more groups of homophones and use them in sentences.

Notes



Week 2

Build through Word Structure

Base Words and Prefixes

One of the most powerful strategies you can use to expand your vocabulary is to learn about word structure.

This week we will begin to explore the important subject of *word structure*. When we talk about word structure, we mean that many words are made up of two or more separate parts. If we understand how these parts fit together, we can better understand the meaning of the word itself.

Base words are the simplest and most familiar words we have in the English language. They are complete in themselves and don't need anything else to make their meanings clear. For example, *dog*, *cat*, *rabbit*, *elephant*, *run*, *walk*, and *stumble* are all base words. So are *and*, *the*, *fast*, *slow*, *up*, and *down*. Whether base words have one syllable or several, they are always complete and make sense as independent words.

Prefixes are syllables that can be added to the beginning of many words. Prefixes are *not* complete in themselves, but they do serve an important function: They change the *meaning* of the word to which they are added.

A. Prefixes That Mean "Not"

- One of the most commonly used prefixes is *un-*, which means "not" or "the opposite" of something. It is often added to adjectives to create pairs of descriptive words with opposite meanings.

fair	unfair
equal	unequal
certain	uncertain
even	uneven
usual	unusual

Word Structure

The words in the preceding list show how a knowledge of prefixes can help you understand word structure. For example, the word *fair* is a base word that can stand on its own. When we add the prefix *un-*, we form a word that has two parts, a prefix and a base: *un + fair*. This is the type of two-part word structure we will see throughout this week.

Can you think of other descriptive words to which you can add the prefix *un-*?

The prefix *un-* can also be added to verbs. In the following examples, the second verb in each pair means "to do the opposite" of the first verb.

fold	unfold
load	unload
lock	unlock
tie	untie
wrap	unwrap

……

See if you can think of other verbs that can take the prefix *un*-.

____

____

____

____

____

……

- The prefix *dis*- also means "not" or "the opposite of something." It an be used with verbs, nouns, and adjectives.

like	dislike
obey	disobey
appear	disappear
order	disorder
comfort	discomfort
loyal	disloyal
honest	dishonest

Write some other words that can begin with the prefix *dis-*. Use the dictionary if you need to. Make sure that the words you look up actually do begin with the prefix *dis-* used to mean "not." Some words such as *display* and *distress* begin with *dis-*, but this syllable is not used in quite the same way as the prefix in *dislike* or *disorder*.

- Finally, the prefix *non-* also means "not" or "the opposite." It is often used to form adjectives and nouns.

  nonstop, nonviolent, nonprofit, nonskid, nonfiction

As you read, notice words with prefixes. Place interesting ones in your vocabulary notebook.

B. Prefixes With a Variety of Meanings

- The prefix *re-* is added to some verbs to show that something is done again.

play	replay
use	reuse
heat	reheat
start	restart
make	remake

The same prefix can be used to suggest the idea of moving back or of returning something to its former state.

return
refund
restore
reverse
recollect

Notice that a word such as *recollect* does not mean "to collect again." Instead, it means "to bring something *back* to memory after a period of time." The word *restore* does not mean "to store again"; it means "to put something *back* in its former location or condition." You already know that *reverse* means to turn around and go *back* in the direction you came from.

• •

Look at the following definitions and then write the word beginning with *re-* that fits in each case.

To make extensive changes or repairs to a structure:

____

To catch a basketball that bounces off the backboard:

____

To revive and restore strength:

____

To strengthen with additional support:

____

• •

- The words *over*, *under*, and *out* can also be used as prefixes. They often create verbs that mean "going beyond something."

  overtake, overthrow, overflow, overheat, overlook

  undertake, undersell, underplay, undergo, underrate

  outgrow, outsmart, outspend, outhit, outweigh

You can probably think of still more words that begin with these prefixes. In fact, some of them aren't verbs. After each of the following definitions, write the word beginning with *over-* or *under-* or *out-* that fits.

The outer garment you wear when it's cold:

____

The player or team that is not favored to win:

____

Where you go when the weather is nice:

____

To put too much stuff in the car:

____

The way you pitch a softball:

____

To beat everybody else in a race:

____

- The words *off* and *on* can also be used as prefixes. When they are used this way, *off* means "from, out of" and *on* means "on, toward."

  offshore, offside, offset, offstage, offshoot, offbeat

  onshore, onside, onset, onstage, onrush, onboard

- Here are some other prefixes you encounter fairly often:

  mid- means "in the middle."
  midday, midnight, midyear, midway, midfield

  mis- means "wrong" or "bad."
  misquote, mispronounce, misbehave

  pre- means "before."
  prewar, precook, prejudge

  post- means "after."
  postwar, postdate, postmodern

Look in your dictionary and find other words beginning with these prefixes that you might want to use. Write these words in your vocabulary notebook.

C. Absorbed Prefixes

The prefix *in-* often means "not" or "without."

incorrect, informal, infrequent, inconvenient

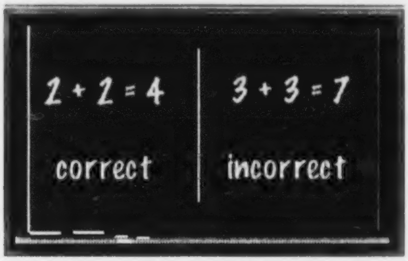
Sometimes the prefix *in-* has to be written with other spellings so that it can be pronounced more easily before certain consonants. When this happens, *in-* becomes an *absorbed prefix*.

For example, *in-* changes to *im-* before the letters *m* and *p*:

imperfect, immortal

The prefix *in-* changes to *il-* before the letter *l*, and it changes to *ir-* before the letter *r*:

illegal, illiterate
irregular, irrational



Look at the sentences given below. Write the word beginning with *in-* or *im-* or *il-* or *ir-* that fits in each case.

Something that is not proper is

________________________.

Something that is not logical is

________________________.

Something that is not mature is

________________________.

Something that is not human is

________________________.

Someone who is not responsible is

________________________.

Week 2. **Check Yourself**

Answer the following questions. Use a separate piece of paper when you need more space.

1. Think of some familiar words and then add as many prefixes as you can to each word. Here are a few examples:

Base Words	*Possible Prefixes*
cover	uncover, recover
locate	dislocate, relocate
run	outrun, overrun
hand	overhand, underhand

How many prefixes can you add to the following words?

place ____

connect ____

qualified ____

Now think of other words that use the same prefixes. Use each word in a sentence.

____

____

____

____

2. Think of a sentence that uses a familiar verb or adjective. Then write another sentence using the same word with a prefix added. Here are some examples:

a. I *agree* with most of the things you said.

However, I *disagree* with your opinion of that movie

b. Let's *use* new materials for this part of the house.

We can *reuse* the bricks and boards for the garage.

c. Most of the answers are *correct*.

Two of the answers are ____________________.

d. This word is hard to *pronounce*.

____.

Week 3

Build through Word Endings

Base Words and Suffixes

This week we will continue to find out more about word structure. Once again we will add something to base words to form new words.

Suffixes are syllables added at the end of words: *help*, *helper*; *quick*, *quickly*; and so on. Suffixes are not complete words in their own right, but they do have meaning and they affect the way a word is used in a sentence by changing it from one part of speech to another. For example, the verb *help* is changed to the noun *helper* by the addition of the suffix *-er*.

A. Adjective-Forming Suffixes

- The suffix *-ful* means "filled with something" or "able to do something." It is often added to nouns or verbs to change them to adjectives.

help	helpful
power	powerful
hope	hopeful
peace	peaceful
use	useful
forget	forgetful

List some more words that can take the suffix *-ful*.

thank ________

wish ________

_____ ________

_____ ________

_____ ________

Word Structure

The words in the preceding list show how suffixes affect word structure. For example, the word *help* can stand on its own. When we add a suffix, we form a word that has two parts, a base word and a suffix: *help* + *ful*. This is the type of two-part word structure we will see throughout this week.

- The suffix *-less* can also be added to nouns or verbs to form adjectives. This suffix means "without" or "something that does not."

cloud	cloudless
fear	fearless
spot	spotless
weight	weightless
worth	worthless

……

Can you think of other words that can take the suffix *-less*?

fault	________________
______	________________
______	________________

……

In some cases, either *-ful* or *-less* can be added to the same base word. When this is done, we get pairs of adjectives that have the opposite meaning:

careful	careless
fearful	fearless
joyful	joyless
hopeful	hopeless
useful	useless

Think of some other words that can end with both of these suffixes.

restful ______

______ ______

______ ______

The following adjective-forming suffixes are used very often. Notice that most of the base words are nouns or verbs. In fact, a number of words such as *love* or *use* can be either nouns or verbs. Also notice that the final *e* in some base words is dropped when the suffix begins with a vowel.

- The suffixes *-able* and *-ible* mean "capable of being." For example, something that is *usable* is capable of being used.

love, lovable
use, usable
read, readable
break, breakable

sense, sensible
collapse, collapsible
permit, permissible
respond, responsible

Notice words that you will want to use in your own writing. Add these words to your vocabulary notebook as you go along.

- The suffixes *-ic* and *-ish* mean "resembling in form; derived from; in the manner of." For example, someone who is *childish* is acting like a child.

hero, heroic
graph, graphic
strategy, strategic

girl, girlish
boy, boyish
fool, foolish

Can you think of some other words that end with the suffixes *-ic* or *-ish*?

metal ______________ child ______________

______ ______________ ______ ______________

______ ______________ ______ ______________

A number of other words that end with *-ic* are also adjectives: *basic*, *civic*, *classic*, *frantic*, and *hectic*, for example. Here the suffix *-ic* is not always added to clear base words, but the words are adjectives none the less.

With a partner, practice using these words in sentences. In your vocabulary notebook, write those words that you want to discuss or study further.

- The suffix *-ive* means "leaning toward" a certain action. For example, someone is *selective* if he or she tends to be careful when choosing things. This suffix is often used to change verbs to adjectives.

act, active
express, expressive
progress, progressive

select, selective
decide, decisive
extend, extensive

Write a sentence using each of the *-ive* words listed above.

He is a very *active* person.

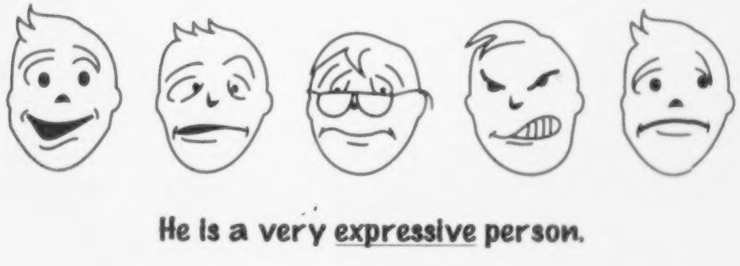
She is very ___________ when she chooses a new hat.

____.

____.

____.

____.



He is a very expressive person.

- The suffix *-ous* means "possessing" or "full of." For example, something that is *dangerous* is full of danger. This suffix is often used to change nouns to adjectives.

fame, famous
hazard, hazardous
peril, perilous
joy, joyous
nerve, nervous
rigor, rigorous

Can you think of phrases in which these adjectives could be used? If necessary, look up the meanings of the base words and the adjectives in your dictionary.

a *famous* person

a ______________________________ occasion

a ______________________ curve in the road

____

____

____

- The letter *-y* can be used as a suffix that means "showing, suggesting." This suffix is often used to change nouns to adjectives. (Drop the final *e* before adding *-y*, as in *easy*.)

fun, funny
luck, lucky
grime, grimy
ease, easy
mud, muddy
slime, slimy

• •

In your reading in books, magazines, and newspapers, find other adjectives that end with *-y* and list them here.

____________________ ____________________

____________________ ____________________

____________________ ____________________

____________________ ____________________

• •

- A number of adjectives end with the suffixes *-ant* and *-ent*. These adjectives mean "performing a certain action or being in a certain condition."

abundant
elegant
ignorant
pleasant
relevant

competent
consistent
excellent
innocent
persistent

See if you and your partner can use these words in sentences. Look in the dictionary to check any words you're not sure of.

B. The Adverb-Forming Suffix *-ly*

- The suffix *-ly* means "in a certain way." It is often added to adjectives to change them to adverbs. When an adjective such as *easy* ends with *y*, the final *y* is changed to *i* before the suffix is added.

Adjective	Adverb
quick	quickly
slow	slowly
bad	badly
easy	easily
careful	carefully
happy	happily

• •

Add *-ly* to change each of the following adjectives to an adverb. Use each adverb in a sentence.

Adjective **Adverb** **Sentence**

dreary ____________________

____.

calm ____________________

____.

warm ____________________

____.

dreamy ____________________

____.

• •

In your reading, notice adverbs that end with *-ly*. Copy the sentences to show how they are used, and add the words to your vocabulary notebook.

NOTES

C. Verb-Forming Suffixes

- The suffix *-en* means "to cause to be" or "to cause to have." This suffix can be added to some adjectives to change them to verbs. For example, if we *soften* something, we cause it to become *soft*.

Adjective	Verb
dark	darken
bright	brighten
hard	harden
thick	thicken
sharp	sharpen

• •

Think of some descriptive words that you often use. Can you think of any that can be changed to verbs by adding the suffix *-en*? Write these words as verbs ending with *-en*.

________________	*weaken*
________________	________________
________________	________________
________________	________________

• •

- The suffix *-ify* means "to cause or make." For example, if we ***purify*** something, we cause it to become ***pure***. This suffix is often added to nouns or adjectives to change them to verbs.

just	justify
clear	clarify
beauty	beautify
false	falsify
terror	terrify
intense	intensify

……

Look at the following words. Write each one with the suffix *-ify* added to change it to a verb, and then define the word or use it in a sentence.

Verb **Definition**

class ____________

____

solid ____________

____

horror ____________

____

liquid ____________

____

……

- The suffix *-ize* means "to make or cause to become." For example, if we *memorize* something, we cause it to be committed to our *memory*. This suffix can also be added to some nouns or adjectives to change them to verbs.

critic	criticize
apology	apologize
central	centralize
civil	civilize
item	itemize
memory	memorize
popular	popularize

Add the suffix *-ize* to each of the following words to make it a verb. Can you use each verb in a sentence?

Verb **Sentence**

hospital ________

____.

vapor ________

____.

natural ________

____.

normal ________

____.

D. Noun-Forming Suffixes

- The suffixes *-er* and *-or* are often used change verbs to nouns. These two suffixes specify the person or thing that performs the action of the verb. For example, someone who swims is a *swimmer* and someone who sails is a *sailor*.

begin, beginner
follow, follower
lead, leader
run, runner
swim, swimmer

act, actor
elevate, elevator
govern, governor
invent, inventor
sail, sailor

……

Add *-er* or *-or* to each of the following verbs to change it to a noun.

start ________________

creep ________________

stroll ________________

reflect ________________

conduct ________________

protect ________________

……

In some cases the *-or* suffix is found in words that are not base words in their own right. However, these words still name someone who *does* something or *is* something.

ancestor, author, doctor, mayor, pastor, sponsor

- The suffix *-ion* is one of the most important noun-forming suffixes in the English language. It changes verbs to nouns that name the act or result of doing something. In particular, there are many verbs that end with *-ate*. With these verbs, just drop the final *e* and add *-ion* to form nouns. When the verb ends with *ss*, just add *-ion* with no further change.

locate	location
dictate	dictation
elevate	elevation
migrate	migration
rotate	rotation
discuss	discussion
express	expression
impress	impression

Other verbs have to undergo even greater changes before the suffix *-ion* can be added to form nouns. Here are some examples:

admit	admission
extend	extension
describe	description
accuse	accusation
identify	identification
civilize	civilization

Sometimes the final consonant of the first word changes when the suffix is added, as in *admit* and *admission*. Often the letter *t* is added before *-ion* to form a suffix that is spelled *-tion* and is pronounced like the word *shun*. This is the case in *describe* and *description*. In some cases another syllable is added to form the suffix *-ation*, as in *accuse* and *accusation*.

Often you can figure out the meaning of a word that ends with the suffix *-ion* if you look carefully at the original word on which it is constructed. See if you can do that with these words:

Original Word and Its Meaning

calculation ______________________________

____

confession ______________________________

____

donation ______________________________

____

permission ______________________________

____

prescription ______________________________

____

Discuss with a partner.

- In Section A we saw the adjective-forming suffixes *-able* and *-ible*, which meant "capable of being." The suffixes *-ability* and *-ibility* are closely related and are used to form nouns that mean "the tendency to act or to be acted upon in a certain way."

Adjective	Noun
usable	usability
readable	readability
breakable	breakability
sensible	sensibility
responsible	responsibility
visible	visibility

In your reading, watch for any other words ending with *-ability* and *-ibility* and add them to your vocabulary notebook.

- The suffix *-ment* means "the act or result of doing something." It is often used to change verbs to nouns.

employ	employment
govern	government
entertain	entertainment
amaze	amazement

Add the suffix *-ment* to the following words to change them to nouns.

align ____________________

enjoy ____________________

resent ____________________

punish ____________________

- The suffix *-ness* means "the condition or state of being." It can be used to change adjectives to nouns. When the adjective ends with *y*, this letter changes to *i* before the suffix is added.

dark	darkness
bright	brightness
hard	hardness
soft	softness
weak	weakness
happy	happiness

Always challenge yourself to use words in a sentence, especially when you feel uncertain about word meaning. Discuss them with your partner.

Look at each of the following words ending with *-ness* and give a brief definition of each one.

emptiness

____

goodness

____

weariness

____

lightness

____

- The suffixes *-ant* and *-ent* can be added to verbs to name the person or the thing that performs an action.

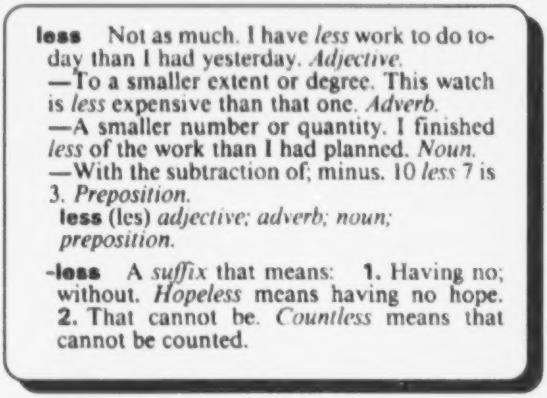
assist, assistant
attend, attendant
depend, dependent
correspond, correspondent

The suffixes *-ance* and *-ence* are related to *-ant* and *-ent*. The suffixes *-ance* and *-ence* name the quality of something or the process of doing something.

assistance
attendance
dependence
correspondence

In your vocabulary notebook, write the words you want to remember that end with the suffixes we have seen.

As you practice writing suffixes, check a dictionary to be sure that the base words and the suffixes you choose are correct and can be combined to form new words. Most dictionaries list suffixes as separate entries, preceded by a hyphen (*-ness*, *-ly*). In this way, you can distinguish between individual words (such as *able* or *less*) and suffixes that are spelled the same way (*-able* or *-less*). Also remember that the suffix *-ful* is spelled with one *l*; the word *full* is spelled with two *l*'s.



less Not as much. I have *less* work to do today than I had yesterday. *Adjective.*
—To a smaller extent or degree. This watch is *less* expensive than that one. *Adverb.*
—A smaller number or quantity. I finished *less* of the work than I had planned. *Noun.*
—With the subtraction of; minus. 10 *less* 7 is 3. *Preposition.*
less (les) *adjective; adverb; noun; preposition.*

-less A *suffix* that means: **1.** Having no; without. *Hopeless* means having no hope. **2.** That cannot be. *Countless* means that cannot be counted.

Macmillan School Dictionary 1. New York: Macmillan/McGraw Hill, 1993.

E. Affixes and Roots

The term **affixes** includes both prefixes and suffixes. In later weeks we will use this term as we see how prefixes and suffixes can be used to form an ever-increasing number of words.

Last week we saw prefixes added to base words. This week we have seen that many suffixes can also be added to base words. Remember that base words have their own meaning and are complete in themselves.

However, affixes can also be added to other word parts called **roots**. These are *parts* of words that have been borrowed from other languages such as Latin and Greek. For example, in the words *import* and *portable*, the root *port-* is taken from the Latin word *portare*, which meant "to carry."

Although word roots are important in English, they are not complete in themselves and cannot be used as independent words. Their meaning becomes clear *only* when they are joined with affixes. This subject will be discussed more fully when we talk about word roots and word families in weeks to come.

Week 3. **Check Yourself**

Answer the following questions. Use a separate piece of paper when you need more space.

1. Choose some familiar words and see how many suffixes you can add. Notice how the suffix changes the way the word can be used in a sentence, and then write sentences of your own. For example:

use	useful, useless, usable
communicate	communication
hazard	hazardous
combine	combination
happy	happily, happiness

Now pick some words of your own and write them below:

2. Select some words that already have suffixes. Explain how the word is constructed and show what the parts of the word mean. Use each word in a sentence. Here are some examples:

employment: The suffix *-ment* is added to the verb *employ*. The suffix changes the verb to a noun meaning "the state of being employed."

My uncle's *employment* with that company lasted for fifteen years.

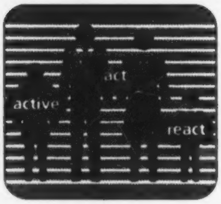
continuous: The suffix *-ous* is added to the verb *continue*. The suffix changes the verb to an adjective which describes something that goes on without stopping.

After the storm there was a *continuous* flow of water that lasted for hours.

Challenge yourself. Can you use these words?

enormous, frivolous, momentous, ominous, pompous, stupendous, tremendous

Vocabulary Notebook: List at least one new word each day in your notebook. Come back to these words once a week to review them.



Week 4

Find Related Words and Grow

This week we turn our attention to groups of words that share something in common. By searching for similarities, we can better understand the effect that prefixes and suffixes have on base words. We can also discover that words which appear to be different may share a common meaning.

Related words are built on the same base. This means that they share some common element of meaning no matter how many affixes are added. For example, look at this group of words:

act
action
active
activity
activate
re**act**
re**act**ion
in**act**ion
de**act**ivate

Several affixes are used here, but the word *act* can always be seen clearly in each example. Although we can change the verb *act* to nouns (*action*, *activity*, *reaction*), to adjectives (*active*, *inactive*), and even to other forms of the verb (*activate*, *react*, *deactivate*), the meaning of *act* is present in all these words. For example, *react* means "to act against something," *inactive* simply means "not active," and *deactivate* means "to make inactive."

Word Structure

This week you see that it is possible to add several affixes to the same base word. When we do this, we can construct words that consist of three or more parts. For example, the base word *act* can have both a prefix and a suffix added, as in the word *reaction*, which is made up of three parts: *re* + *act* + *ion*. We can add two suffixes, as in the word *activate*, which has three parts: *act* + *iv* + *ate*. We can even add a prefix to this to form the word *deactivate*, which has four parts: *de* + *act* + *iv* + *ate*. You can see that an awareness of word structure helps you understand that words are put together in logical ways and that each part of the word contributes to its meaning.

……

How many words can you think of that are related to the word *direct*?

direction ____________

____________ ____________

____________ ____________

____________ ____________

……

Suffixes are especially important in creating groups of related words. Because they change the part of speech and the way a word is used in a sentence, suffixes allow us to form several words that share a common meaning. Sometimes we can add suffixes without changing the spelling of the original word.

detect, detective
break, breakage
comfort, comfortable
connect, connection
govern, government
joy, joyful

As we saw in the preceding week, a number of other words do change their spelling when suffixes are added. Often the final *e* is dropped or some other letter is changed at the end of the base word to make pronunciation easier. Here are some examples:

use, usable
locate, location
pure, purify
decide, decision
simple, simplify
persuade, persuasive

A. Choosing the Right Suffix

One good way to practice creating groups of related words is to start with some verbs and then add the suffix that will change each verb to a noun. First look at these suffixes:

SUFFIXES: -er, -ion, -ance, -ment, -or

Now choose the suffix that will change each of the following verbs to a noun. (For now, use only one suffix with each verb). Write your answers on a separate piece of paper if you prefer.

VERB	**NOUN**
elect	____________
help	____________
enjoy	____________
sail	____________
perform	____________

Can you think of any other words that end with these suffixes? As you read, write down words that you want to add to your vocabulary.

____________________ ____________________
____________________ ____________________
____________________ ____________________

B. Thinking of Suffixes on Your Own

Here is another list of verbs to change into nouns, but this time you won't have a list of suffixes to choose from. If necessary, refer to the noun-forming suffixes discussed in Week 3, Section D. In some cases you should be able to find two nouns that are related to a particular verb. Write your answers in the spaces below or on a separate piece of paper if you prefer. Work with a partner whenever possible.

Verbs	**Nouns**
invent	____________, ____________
adjust	____________, ____________
consume	____________, ____________
impress	____________, ____________
depend	____________, ____________

……

In your reading, notice any nouns that are formed by adding suffixes to verbs: *act* and *action* or *swim* and *swimmer*, for example. Write down these nouns as you encounter them.

____________ ____________

____________ ____________

____________ ____________

……

C. Choosing Adjective Suffixes

In the following pairs of related words, see if you can change nouns and verbs into adjectives using suffixes such as *-y*, *-ous*, *-ful*, *-able*, or *-ive*. Write your answers on a separate piece of paper if you prefer.

Nouns or Verbs	**Adjectives**
foam	____________
break	____________
fame	____________
create	____________
danger	____________

……

As you read, take note of adjectives that end with these suffixes. If the adjective is built on a noun or verb, make sure you understand the original word (as in *fame* and *famous*).

____________ ____________ ____________

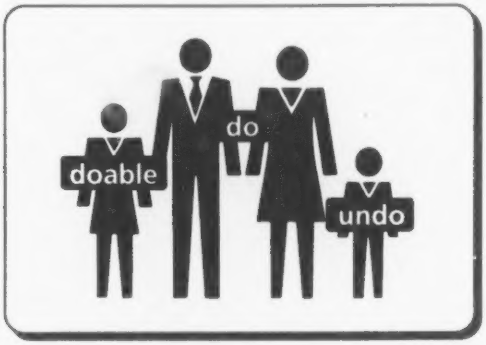
____________ ____________ ____________

……

D. Groups of Related Words

Finally, see how many related words you can think of on your own. Use each of the given words as the starting point and write two or three related words, using the prefixes and suffixes we have seen so far. The first example is already given.

Given Word	**Related Words**		
connect	disconnect,	connection	
law	________	________	________
organize	________	________	________
honor	________	________	________
construct	________	________	________
locate	________	________	________



Week 4. **Check Yourself**

Answer the following questions. Use a separate piece of paper when you need more space.

1. Look at each of the following examples. Notice the word in italics in the first sentence in each pair. In the second sentence in each pair, decide on the related form of the word that will fit in the blank. Write the word in the blank space. The first example is already given.

a. This design is not *simple* enough.

We must *simplify* it even more.

b. There were no *clouds* in the sky.

The sky was ______________.

c. Anna is interested in *science*.

She wants to be a ____________ someday.

d. This machine will *help* us on our next project.

It will be __________ when we record information.

e. Be sure to *measure* each piece carefully.

We must have precise ______________
if everything is going to fit together.

2. Look at each sentence given below. Write another sentence using a related form of the word in italics. The second sentence in each example should reinforce the meaning of the first sentence, just as you saw in Section 1.

a. How can we *improve* the quality of our work?

____

b. Does this map *indicate* the location of the building?

____

c. We need some place to *store* all this stuff.

____

d. I'm afraid this trip will be a *disaster*.

____

e. He is sure his plan will *work*.

____

Week 5

Gain Meaning from Context

In almost any story or selection in a textbook you may encounter words that are unfamiliar. Often these are *key words* that are very important and must be understood clearly. Clues to the meaning of such key words are sometimes provided by *context*. This means that information in the surrounding sentences often helps to clarify the meaning of an unfamiliar word. Although context will not always provide a complete definition of such a word, it can give important information that helps you understand what you are reading.

A. Look for Signals

Writers often use certain cues or signals to indicate that an important word is going to be defined. In the preceding paragraph you saw one of these signals: the word *context* was written in italics to highlight its importance and show that it is the key word in the paragraph. Then a definition was given in the very next sentence.

> Clues to the meaning of such key words are sometimes provided by *context*. This means that information in the surrounding sentences often helps to clarify the meaning of an unfamiliar word.

- Particularly in textbooks, important words may be written in **boldface**. This darker print also helps these words stand out. Often such key words are defined in context.

- The colon (:) is another signal that can be used to introduce a passage which explains a word mentioned earlier in the sentence. The following example uses both boldface and the colon.

> In the microscope we saw that the drop of water contained many **bacteria**: one-celled organisms that are too small to be seen by the eye alone.

The colon may also be used to introduce a list of things that help to define or elaborate on a key word. In such cases, the colon can represent the words "as follows."

> Three things made the new engine particularly *efficient*: its light weight, its low fuel consumption, and its high energy output.

- Other signals are given by words such as "that is" or "for example" or "for instance." These words let you know that more information about an important word is going to follow.

> One symptom of the disease is *lethargy*; **that is**, a feeling of sluggishness and a lack of alertness.

> Several of the replacement parts were found to be *defective*. **For example**, some had been broken in shipment and others were poorly constructed.

Find the Cues in These Examples

In subject areas such as science or social studies, you will often find that important words are emphasized and defined as soon as they are introduced. Look at the following examples and then answer the questions about each one.

> Scientists warned that the volcanic eruption might cause a **tsunami**: a powerful ocean wave that can do great damage.

What is the key word? ______________________________

What cue lets you know that a definition will follow?

____

What is the definition?

____.

> Centuries ago, people believed that the earth was the center of the universe. They also believed that the earth was *stationary* in space because they never detected any movement.

What is the key word?

____

What cue lets you know that the word is important?

____

What is the definition?

____

> The **drought** had caused enormous damage. After months without rain, all the crops had withered and died.

What is the key word?

____

What cue lets you know that the word is important?

____

What is the definition?

____

B. Use Inference

You won't always find obvious cues to let you know that a word is going to be defined in context. In the next example there is a clear connection between the two sentences even though no signal is given.

> The small animal was startled by the noise. It ran back into its *lair* until the danger passed.

By combining the information in these sentences, you can tell that a *lair* is a place in which an animal can hide when it is frightened. We can understand the word better if we think of a *lair* as a kind of den or hiding place.

In the preceding example we had to use the thought process called *inference* in order to figure out the meaning of the word *lair*.

When we use *inference*, we take the information we are given and then rely on our own knowledge and thinking ability to find relationships that may not be apparent at first glance. We have to analyze what we are reading and then rearrange it in our own mind.

In effect, we say to ourselves, "The sentences about the small animal tell me that a *lair* is a place in which an animal can hide when it is frightened or in danger."

Earlier we saw an example which showed how the colon provided a signal indicating that we would find more information defining a key word:

> Three things made the new engine particularly *efficient*: its light weight, its low fuel consumption, and its high energy output.

If we stop to think about this sentence and rearrange the information so that it is more meaningful for us, we might say that "The engine is efficient *because* of its light weight, low fuel consumption, and high energy output." We can also take another step by formulating a more general definition such as this: "Something is *efficient* if it works well and gives the best possible results for the smallest amount of effort."

This points up one of the greatest values of inference. It also emphasizes one of the most worthwhile things you can do as you develop your own vocabulary.

Analyze the information you find in context and use it to develop your *own* definition of an unfamiliar word. If this definition is not as complete as you would like, then write down the questions that remain. These can guide you as you search for more information.

Practice Using Inference Yourself

Let's begin with an example that does not contain any obvious signals, but it does provide a definition of the word *festive* if we know how to use inference. Read the paragraph and then answer the questions that follow.

> Susan's birthday party was the best she had ever had. There were lots of hats and noisemakers, and the room was filled with balloons and streamers. Everyone had a great time on this festive occasion.

- What specific things made this the best party Susan had ever had?

____

- What definition of *festive* can you give, based on the information in the paragraph?

____

These sentences tell of an enjoyable party and of a room filled with balloons and decorations. This context suggests that *festive* means "joyful, happy, glad, merry." You may already know the word *festival* and be able to connect the two related words. Even though there is no obvious signal such as a colon to let you know that a definition is coming, you should realize that the second sentence contributes to the meaning of the word *festive* in the last sentence.

The following paragraph does clarify the meaning of the word *paleontologist* if we analyze the information and make the necessary connections. Read the paragraph and answer the questions that follow.

> Ed has always been interested in prehistoric animals. He especially likes to read about the ways scientists figure out the age of extinct animals by studying fossils. He wants to be a *paleontologist* when he grows up.

- What is Ed interested in?

  ____

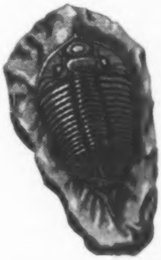
- What does he like to read about?

  ____

- By putting all this information together, how would you define the word *paleontologist*?

  ____

Check your definition by looking in a dictionary. You will probably find that the main entry is *paleontology*: the area of science that studies life in earlier periods by examining fossil remains. Notice that *paleontology* is the branch of science and a *paleontologist* is someone who specializes in that branch.



C. Discover the Variety of Meanings in a Single Word

It is easy to get the idea that "a word" has "a meaning" that can be found in "the dictionary." Often, however, this is not the case. Many words in the English language have more than one meaning, and there are also many kinds of dictionaries (as you will see in Week 9). Only by paying close attention to context can we be sure which meaning applies in a particular situation.

Even simple, familiar words can have a variety of meanings. Look at the different uses of the word *run* in the following sentences.

run (verb)

They **run** every morning for exercise.
(to move quickly—faster than a walk.)

The machine will **run** better if you oil it.
(to operate or work)

Buses **run** every hour from here to Boston.
(to travel regularly)

They **run** a gift shop in the mall.
(to operate, be in charge of)

run (noun)

I took the dog for a long **run** this morning.
(the act of running)

> The play had a **run** of almost a year.
> (a period of time during which something happens repeatedly)
>
> There was a big **run** on purple socks at the store.
> (a sudden demand)
>
> The ski **run** is very popular.
> (a steep path or track)

If you look in a collegiate or unabridged dictionary, you will find that *run* has an enormous number of uses in addition to the ones given here. The important thing is that you must see how the word is used in context before you can have any idea of its meaning. In fact, you can't even look it up in a dictionary without considering how it is used in a particular sentence. How else will you know which definition to look at?

• •

The word *walk* can also be a verb or a noun. Write several sentences using *walk* in different ways. If you run out of ideas, look in a dictionary.

____

____

____

____

• •

Different Pronunciation and Meanings

In the preceding section, the word *run* did not change its spelling or pronunciation, even though it was used in a number of different ways. There are other words that keep the same spelling but change their pronunciation when they are used in different ways with different meanings. Look at the following sentences containing the word *bow*.

> He is very skillful with the *bow* and arrow.
> She tied an elaborate *bow* on the package.
>
> The actor returned to *bow* at the end of the play.
> The *bow* of the ship cut through the choppy water.

In the first two sentences, *bow* rhymes with *snow*. It is used as a noun in both sentences, but the meaning is very different in each case. In the next two sentences, *bow* rhymes with *bow*. It is used as a verb in the first sentence and as a noun in the second. Once again, both meanings are different from those found in the first pair of sentences.

The word *use* rhymes with *loose* when it is a noun; it rhymes with *fuse* when it is a verb. Write a sentence showing the word *use* as a verb and as a noun.

____

____

Some words with more than one syllable actually shift the accent when they are used in different ways, even though spelling remains the same. Here are some examples of words of this type.

> They kept a *record* of all their expenses.
> I want to *record* that program so I can watch it again.
>
> We may have to get a *permit* before we can fish here.
> Do they *permit* fishing in this area?

In the first sentence in each pair, the italicized word is used as a noun with the accent on the first syllable: *RECord*, *PERmit*. In the second sentence in each pair, the same word is used as a verb with the accent on the second syllable: *reCORD*, *perMIT*. Once again, it is important to pay attention to context in order to know which form of each word is being used.

• •

The word *complex* has the accent on the first syllable when it is used as a noun, but the accent usually shifts to the second syllable when it is used as an adjective. Write sentences showing each use of the word *complex*.

____

____

• •

The Importance of Context

Although context will not always clarify an unfamiliar word completely, it does provide an important starting point. Furthermore, when a word has a number of meanings, we *must* look closely at context before we consult a dictionary. This is the only way to tell which definition fits the passage we are reading.

Even if we do use context to figure out the meaning of a new word, this does not mean that the word will be remembered or will become a part of everyday vocabulary. If words encountered in reading are important enough to be added to your vocabulary, they should be studied more extensively using the strategies discussed in the following weeks.

NOTES

Week 5. **Check Yourself**

Carefully read the sentences given in the boxes. Then use the information in each example to answer the questions. Use a separate piece of paper when you need more space.

Example One

> The storm's *turbulence* caused the small plane to bounce up and down wildly. It looked like a cork bobbing in a swiftly moving stream.

1. Give a definition of *turbulence* based on the information contained in these two sentences.

____

2. Can you think of a broader definition that might apply to other situations?

____

3. Which of the following pieces of information can be inferred from the example? Mark **T** (True) or **F** (False) after each one. (Notice that the sentences use both the noun *turbulence* and the adjective *turbulent*.)

a. Turbulence can be encountered in air or water. _____

b. Turbulence affects only airplanes. _____

c. The direction of turbulence is often up and down. _____

d. A turbulent sea is calm and placid. _____

Example Two

> After beginning her study of zoology, Anne decided to focus her attention on *ornithology* because of her strong interest in birds.

1. Give a definition of *ornithology* based on the information in this sentence.

____

2. Two pieces of information are important in defining this word. Look closely at the information given before and after the term *ornithology* appeared in the sentence, and then answer the following questions:

a. Ornithology is a branch of study contained under what broader subject?

____

b. Ornithology is specifically the study of what?

____

Example Three

> They looked out across the broad *panorama*, letting their eyes wander across the endless prairie and then up into the cloudless sky.

1. Give a definition of *panorama* based on the information provided in the sentence.

____

2. Make up your own sentence using *panorama* to refer to some other scene, not just to the endless prairie.

____

Example Four

> We could hardly understand the *guttural* sounds of the language spoken by the native people. Every word seemed to have a harsh, throaty quality that was unpleasant to our ear.

1. How is the word *guttural* used in this sentence? Is it a noun that names something, a verb that tells what someone does, or an adjective that describes something?

____

2. Look at the following statements. Each one is supposed to give a definition of *guttural*, but only one is correct.

a. Words that are hard to understand because they are in a foreign language.

b. Characterized by a harsh quality that makes words difficult to understand because sounds are produced in the throat.

c. Hard to understand because words are spoken by natives.

Which statement gives the most accurate definition of *guttural*? Explain why you chose one definition and why the other two cannot be correct.

____

____

Example Five

The next example provides a chance to combine the information in Week 1 with the material presented this week. In the following sentence, the word in italics is defined in context. After you have read it, answer the questions that follow.

> Ellen tried to *mitigate* the damaging effect of the report by explaining that the situation was not as bad as it seemed and that many of the problems could be fixed very easily.

1. Which is the best synonym: *describe*, *lessen*, or *exceed*?

   ____

2. Which is the best antonym: *imply*, *reveal*, *increase*, or *notice*?

   ____

3. How did you make your choices? What information in the original sentence helped you reach a decision?

____

____

articulate
succinct
precise

Week 6

Say Exactly What You Mean

During this week we will emphasize words that have clear meanings. Such words are important in the middle and upper grades because writing often requires specific words that have fairly narrow definitions and thus give precise information. Let's begin by looking at two student compositions that show how words can be used effectively.

Student Writing: Example One

The following student composition provides a good example of the effective use of specific words.

Should English Be the Official Language of the U.S.?

English should be the official language. It always has been the official language. A lot of people know English and are comfortable with it. They should keep it that way. A lot of people want it to be the official language, and would feel unhappy and protest if it was changed.

It would be very hard on teachers. Trying to teach the kids the language. It would also mean larger classes. Everything would be very confusing!

It would be difficult and expensive for the schools. It would cost a lot of money to buy all the extra supplies. You would have to put signs up everywhere. For restaurants, for street signs, and for signs on almost everything.

My Summary is that things should stay the way they are. It is a waste to change. Most people want and talk English so they would have to learn a different language. It is foolish to change.

Look at the number of words in this composition that have specific meanings:

- official
- language
- comfortable
- protest
- confusing
- expensive
- supplies
- restaurants
- summary
- difficult

You can get a good idea of the importance of these words if you compare the student's composition with another version that has been intentionally rewritten to weaken the effect. This is typical of the kind of thing that might be written by someone who has a more limited vocabulary or who doesn't think that precision is important.

English should be the only language because it has always been that way. Everybody speaks English and they wouldn't like it if it changed.

It would be hard to teach another language because it would be hard for teachers and it would be confusing.

It would cost a lot of money for extra stuff and you would have to change a lot of signs in different places.

Most people want to talk English so it should not change.

You can see that this version is very weak compared with the student's composition. The only significant words left from the original version are *language* and *confusing*. The rest of it is mush: "It has always been that way . . . Everybody speaks English. . . They wouldn't like it . . . It would be hard because it would be hard . . . A lot of money for extra stuff . . . Most people . . . ." All of this is so vague that the argument has no impact compared with the original version.

Some of the solid, specific words in the actual composition may not be used very often in everyday conversation (*official*, *protest*, *summary*), but they are valuable here because of the topic. The important thing is that these words are used correctly (even if the original spellings were not always accurate). The author shows a clear understanding of the *meaning* of these words, and these meanings are used effectively to build a fairly logical argument in favor of making English the "official language," as the student calls it. Even if you don't agree with the author's position, the use of specific words does make her writing effective.

Look again at a few of the words used in the student composition about making English the official language.

expensive comfortable summary protest

Now rewrite each of the following sentences, using one of the preceding words to make each sentence stronger. Make any other changes needed to accommodate each word.

A lot of people *feel OK* about speaking English.

____.

It would *cost a lot* to buy extra supplies

____.

A lot of people *wouldn't like it* if things changed.

____.

My *statement at the end* is that things should not change.

____.

Student Writing: Example Two

Warfare

Why? What entered the human brain to make us senselessly destroy lives and property? Ever since the civilized world existed, they have torn lives apart, murdered, and destroyed for what reasons? We have been frightened, tormented, and destroyed to the limit. Even those of us who choose not to engage in combat still live in fear of bombing raids, insane killers, and terrorist attacks on our innocent selves.

The reasons for fighting range from religious problems to greedy dictators wanting the earth for themselves. And now, a single button or turn of a key can destroy us all.

If we cannot prosper peacefully, there is no hope for our children.

A few excerpts from this composition are given below. Look back at the student's writing to see what strong verb or precise descriptive term was used in each case. Write the missing word in each blank space.

. . . to make us ____________________ destroy lives and property?

Ever since the ________________ world existed . . .

We have been frightened, ________________, and destroyed . . .

. . . insane killers, and ________________ attacks . . .

. . . from religious problems to ________________

• •

Here are some more of the most important words in this composition:

destroy property innocent prosper

Use each one of these words in a sentence that makes a precise statement about something you feel very strongly.

____

____

____

____

• •

Descriptive Words in the Writing of Charles Dickens

Let's close by reading a passage from *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens. Notice how the author uses words that give us a clear picture of a small coastal town in England.

(1) When Mr. Lorry had finished his breakfast, he went out for a stroll on the beach. (2) The little narrow, crooked town of Dover hid itself away from the beach, and ran its head into the chalk cliffs, like a marine ostrich. (3) The beach was a desert of heaps of sea and stones tumbling wildly about, and the sea did what it liked and what it liked was destruction. (4) It thundered at the town and thundered at the cliffs, and brought the coast down, madly. (5) The air among the houses was of so strong a piscatory flavor that one might have supposed sick fish went up to be dipped in it, as sick people went down to be dipped in the sea.

Now look back at the passage to find the following examples of precise words and strong descriptive terms. (The number of each sentence is given in parentheses.)

1. In the first sentence, Dickens does not simply say that Mr. Lorry *walked* along the beach. What word does he use to give us a picture of exactly how Mr. Lorry walked?

   ____

2. In the second sentence, Dickens does not just tell us that Dover was near the chalk cliffs, away from the beach. Instead, he describes the town as though it were a person or an animal. Supply the missing words in this sentence:

The town of Dover ______ ________ away from

the beach, and ______ _______ _______ into the chalk cliffs.

3. At the end of the second sentence, Dickens compares the town to a

_________________ ______________________.

What do you suppose this means? You may not understand this term at first, but you can figure things out from context. You do know that an ostrich hides its head in the sand; Dickens uses the comparison to suggest that the town did the same thing. You can also tell from context that *marine* must have something to do with the sea because the whole passage describes what Mr. Lorry saw in his stroll along the beach. From this, we can infer that Dickens is describing the town as an ostrich that lives on the shore near the sea.

4. In the third sentence, Dickens describes the beach as "a

_____________ _____ __________ _____ _______

__________ ___________ tumbling wildly about."

This creates a strong image. Few of us would ever think of a *desert* as having anything to do with the seacoast.

5. In the fourth sentence, Dickens emphasizes the *sound* of the sea by saying:

   "It ____________ at the town and ____________ at the cliffs."

If you've ever heard the ocean pounding against rocks on the coast, you know what a good description this is.

6. In the fifth sentence, Dickens says that the air had a

   strong________________________________ flavor.

You may not know this word, but you should be able to tell that it is an adjective which describes the *flavor* of the air. (Notice that Dickens makes the description even stronger by saying that the air actually had a "flavor," not just a smell.)

If you pay close attention to the rest of the sentence, context will tell you that *piscatory* must have something to do with what?

____

A look at a dictionary will confirm your answer. In other words, Dickens is using a vivid description to tell us that the air had a fishy "flavor."

Finding Your Own Descriptive Terms

In the paragraph by Dickens, you saw that the author used many unusual comparisons: the town hid itself like an ostrich; the beach was a desert; the air had a strong flavor. Now write some sentences of your own using imaginative descriptions and comparisons.

a. If a town is small and quiet, what kind of animal might you compare it to? Write a sentence making this comparison.

____

b. Now write a sentence comparing a large, busy city to some other kind of animal.

____

c. What strong, unusual verb could you use in a sentence telling about a fierce wind that blew up with a storm?

____

d. What strong, unusual verb could you use in a sentence telling about a gentle stream flowing along?

____

e. Write a sentence comparing the *smell* of something cooking to the *feel* of something smooth or something rough.

____

f. Write a sentence comparing the *flavor* of one thing to the *sound* of something else.

____

Week 6. **Check Yourself**

Answer the following questions. Use a separate piece of paper when you need more space.

1. Here are some mushy sentences using vague, everyday words.

I thought it was a *good* movie.

We saw some *stuff* at the museum.

Did you *like* that program?

We *went* to a lot of different places.

Now look at some words which would bring more precision and clarity to each of the preceding sentences.

enjoy exhibits traveled wonderful

Rewrite each sentence using the new word you have chosen.

I thought it was a ______________________ movie.

We saw some __________________ at the museum.

Did you ________________________ that program?

We _______________________ to a lot of different places.

Now make up your own sentences, first using general words such as *go* or *nice* and then revising each sentence to use more specific ones.

____

____

____

____

2. Write a paragraph describing a pleasant vacation trip. Use the words that are most appropriate for the topic. Then write another paragraph describing a dangerous sea voyage that might have been undertaken by an explorer such as Christopher Columbus. Use descriptive words that are most appropriate to this topic, and see how these words differ from those used in the first paragraph.

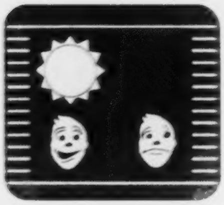
3. Read the following passage from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain and then answer the questions.

> The two boys flew on and on, toward the village, speechless with horror. They glanced backward over their shoulders from time to time, apprehensively, as if they feared they might be followed. Every stump that started up in their path seemed a man and an enemy, and made them catch their breath; and as they sped by some outlying cottages that lay near the village, the barking of the aroused watchdogs seemed to give wings to their feet.

a. What three different words or phrases does Twain use to describe what the boys were doing? What makes these words much more effective than simply saying that they ran fast?

b. The author also uses three effective ways to tell us that the boys were *frightened*. What words or phrases does he use for this purpose?

c. How does context help you determine the meaning of the word *apprehensively* in the second sentence?



Week 7

Play the Analogies Game

This week we move in a more imaginative and challenging direction by creating word analogies. What word would you add to complete the following statement?

Babe Ruth was to baseball as

Michael Jordan is to ______________.

Of course you know the last word is *basketball*. Babe Ruth was a famous *baseball* player of the past, so it makes sense to complete the comparison by saying that Michael Jordan is a famous *basketball* player of the present.

This sentence is an example of an **analogy**: a statement that shows a particular relationship between two pairs of words. When you encounter an analogy, you will see that the last word is missing. This is what makes it interesting: You have to figure out what that word should be. This means that you must know the meanings of all the words and you must also think about the way in which the words are related.

A. Analogies Based on Synonyms

Analogies can be constructed by comparing pairs of *synonyms*. The first two words represent one pair of synonyms; the next two words follow the same pattern and present another pair of synonyms. You have to figure out what the missing word should be.

Word A is to **Synonym of A** as
Word B is to **Synonym of B**.

Here is an example of an analogy using synonyms:

Big is to large as little is to ______________.

Big and *large* mean basically the same thing, so you must find a word that means the same as *little*. Logical choices for the missing word would be *small* or perhaps *tiny*.

Analogies aren't always written out as complete sentences. Here is another way the last analogy can be presented:

big : large :: little : ______________

The colon (:) represents the words "is to" and the double colon (::) represents the word "as."

Here are some more analogies that involve synonyms. How would you complete each one?

1. happy : glad :: sleepy : ________________

2. easy : simple :: hard : ________________

3. begin : start :: end : ________________

B. Analogies Based on Antonyms

The same pattern works for analogies using *antonyms*, but these can be a little trickier than synonyms. The first two words mean the opposite of each other, so the other two words must do the same. For example:

Big is to little as fast is to ________________.

What word is an antonym for *fast*? Obviously, *slow* would be a good choice. Here is the same analogy using the colon and double colon.

big : little :: fast : ________________

Now add the missing words in the following analogies:

4. top : bottom :: front : ________________

5. up : down :: in : ________________

6. first : last :: hot : ________________

C. Analogies That Show Other Relationships

Analogies can be used to demonstrate relationships that are more involved than those we have already seen. What relationship is established by the first pair of words in each of the following examples? What word would establish the same relationship in the second pair of words?

7. glass : smooth :: rock : ______________

8. glove : hand :: shoe : ______________

9. time : clock :: date : ______________

10. fish : water :: bird : ______________

The next pattern is even more challenging than the last one.

General word A is to **specific example A**
as
General word B is to **specific example B.**

Here is an example of this kind of analogy:

tool : hammer :: food : ______________

You can think this through by stating the problem in sentences if it will help you. "*Tool* is a general term, and a *hammer* is a specific type of tool. *Food* is also a general term, so the missing word in the second pair must be a specific kind of food." A great many choices could be made here: carrot, banana, bread, fish, etc.

* * *

Here are some more analogies involving general words and specific examples. What word would complete each one? (There are many possibilities in each example, as you see.)

11. color : red :: flavor : ________________

12. bird : robin :: dog : ________________

13. animal : bear :: fish : ________________

* * *

D. Using Analogies to Expand Your Vocabulary

Analogies can help you explore words that you might not ordinarily think of. For example, instead of choosing just one word to complete an analogy, try to think of a number of different words that might be used, especially when synonyms and antonyms are involved. This works especially well with verbs and with descriptive words. For example:

> big : little :: slow : fast (swift, speedy, quick, rapid, hasty, brisk)

You can see that the various synonyms for *fast* can be very useful in certain situations. For example, it would sound odd to say "A *fast* wind was blowing" but it would be very clear to say "A *brisk* wind was blowing." Also, it would be awkward to say "They made a *fast* decision that they later regretted"; it would be more precise to say "They made a *hasty* decision that they later regretted."

Another possibility is to take the complete analogy and replace *all* the terms with more precise synonyms. For example, here is a simple analogy:

good : bad :: cold : ____________________

The obvious answer is *hot*, of course. Now look at the same analogy using more specific terms.

excellent : terrible :: frigid : _______________

In this case you would want a word that is more precise and descriptive than the word *hot*. Possibilities could include *sweltering*, *torrid*, *steamy*, *scalding*, or *searing*.

As you work with analogies, there are two important things to keep in mind.

The second pair of words must maintain the same *relationship* that was established in the first pair. If the first two words are antonyms, for example, then you must use antonyms to complete the second pair.

You must be absolutely sure of the *meaning* of each word that you encounter in an analogy. This is why practice in using analogies can help you master and use new words.

Week 7. **Check Yourself**

Answer the following questions. Use a separate piece of paper when you need more space.

1. Look at these five words.

occupied heroic apprehend mackerel broad

Now use one of these words to fill each of the blank spaces in the analogies given below. If you're not sure of the meaning of some of the words, consult your dictionary.

a. immense : majestic :: gallant : ____________

b. careful : sloppy :: narrow : ________________

c. get: receive :: catch : ______________________

d. empty : vacant :: full : _____________________

e. bird : ostrich :: fish : ______________________

After you complete each analogy, explain the principle on which it is constructed: antonyms, synonyms, general word compared with specific word, and so on.

2. Make up your own analogies. Try to think of examples that fit the various categories given in the chapter; don't just stick to synonyms and antonyms. Include some that name a type of object and then name a specific example (dog : collie). Also include some that name a thing and then identify what it does (saw : cut).

earth
asteroids
SOLAR SYSTEM
sun
orbit

Week 8

Create Word Maps and Word Webs

Many people are visual learners: They grasp ideas more readily if they can see them represented in words or pictures. This week we will use word maps not only to define words but also to discover relationships among them.

A. Word Maps

A *word map* is a diagram that focuses on three important things we need to know about any word:

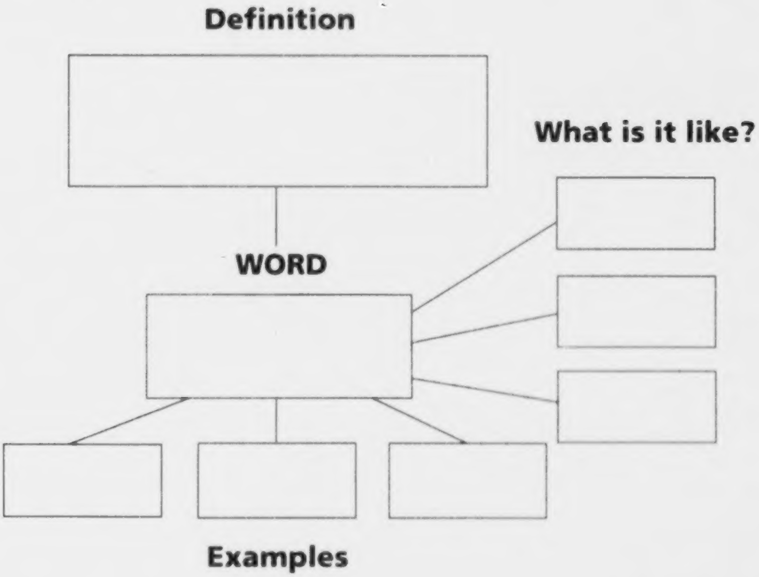
1. What *is* it? (definition)

2. What is it *like*? (synonyms; descriptive terms)

3. What are some *examples*? (specific representatives)

Example 1 shows one type of diagram that can be used to make a word map.

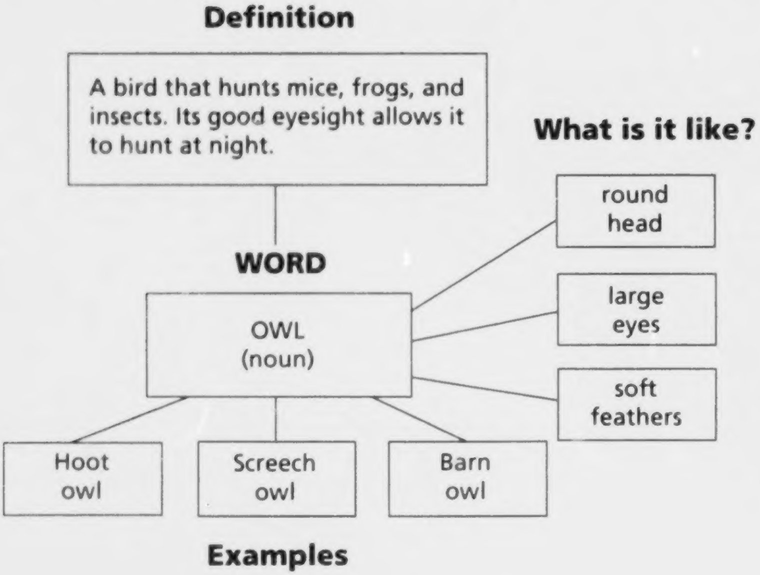
Example 1



The word itself goes in the middle box marked WORD. Just above it we give a dictionary definition, and just below we give some specific examples. In the boxes on the right we can list some synonyms or some descriptive words that help clarify the term.

Let's look at a specific example based on this model. If the word *owl* is encountered in a story, most of us would have a general idea of what an owl is. However, by using a word map like the one in Example 2 we can expand and clarify our understanding of the word.

Example 2


Definition
A bird that hunts mice, frogs, and insects. Its good eyesight allows it to hunt at night.
What is it like?
round head
large eyes
soft feathers
WORD
OWL (noun)
Hoot owl
Screech owl
Barn owl
Examples

Now we get to one of the most important benefits of word maps: They should cause us to ask questions to find out *why* the words in the boxes are important. For example:

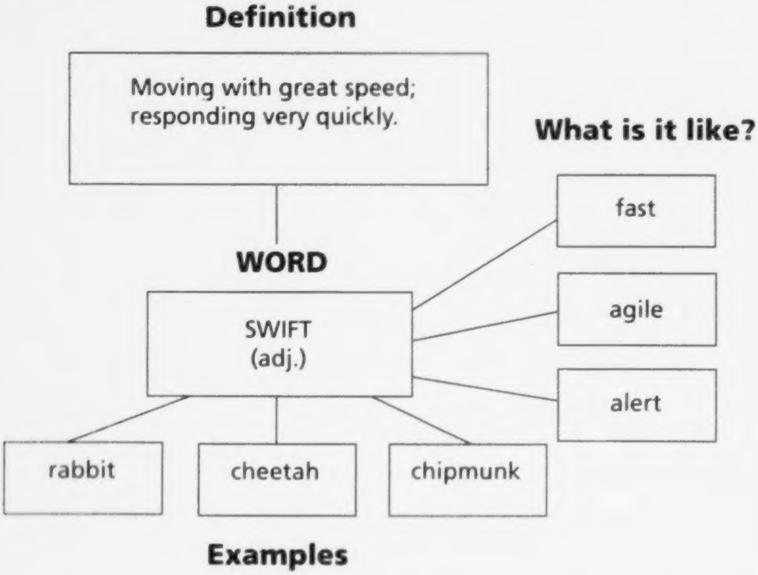
What is the significance of the owl's round head?

What is the value of the soft feathers?

If owls hunt at night, what do they do in the daytime?

The example we just saw was concerned with a definition of the noun *owl*, but the same approach can help to clarify the meaning of words that describe rather than name things. For instance, if you encounter the adjective *swift*, you probably know it has something to do with rapid movement. A word map like the one in Example 3 helps to expand your understanding of the word.

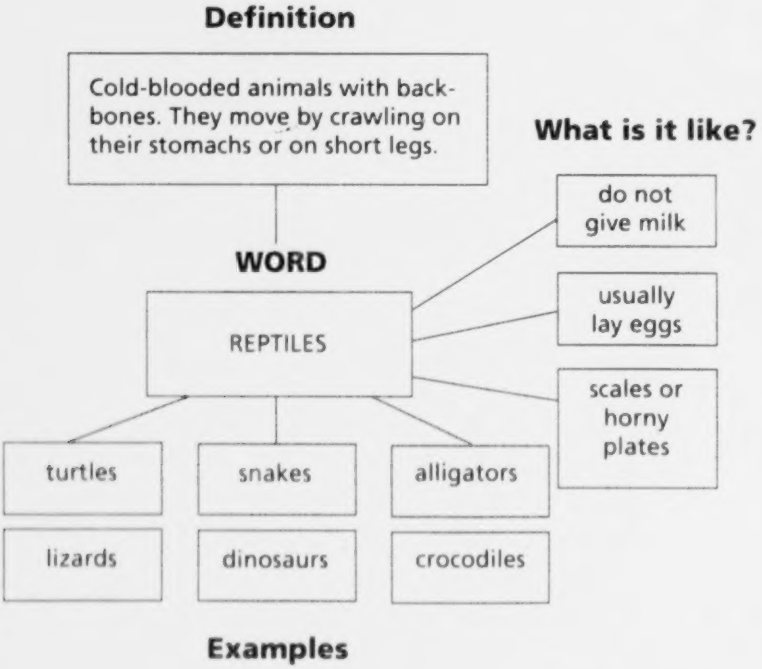
Example 3


Definition
Moving with great speed; responding very quickly.
What is it like?
fast
agile
alert
WORD
SWIFT (adj.)
rabbit
cheetah
chipmunk
Examples

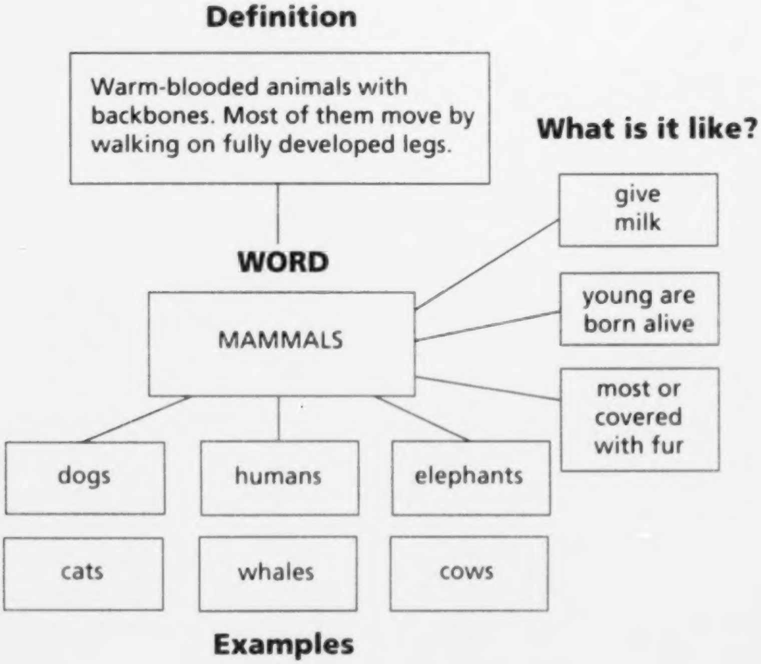
By listing other words that tell "what it is like," we become better acquainted with synonyms. Although synonyms rarely mean *exactly* the same, a combination of synonyms can help to define a word. By referring to the word *agile*, we see that *swift* describes not only the ability to move rapidly but also the ability to move easily from one direction to another. This helps us see that a tennis player must move *swiftly* (the adverb form of the adjective *swift*) even in a small area, not just when he or she is running across the court. Also, if firemen make a *swift* response to a call, it means that they are *alert* and *ready* to move right away.

Word maps can also help with words we may recognize but don't know very well. The next two examples highlight the similarities and differences between *reptiles* and *mammals*.

Example 4

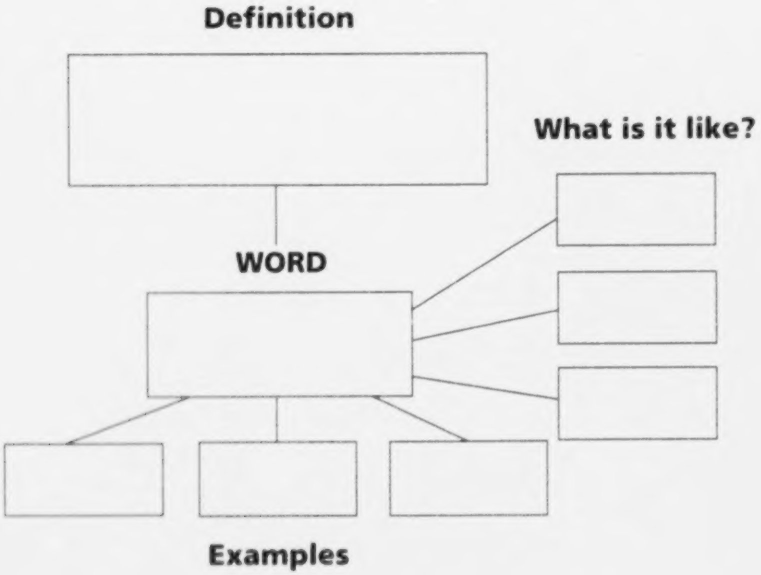

Definition
Cold-blooded animals with backbones. They move by crawling on their stomachs or on short legs.
What is it like?
do not give milk
WORD
usually lay eggs
REPTILES
scales or horny plates
turtles
snakes
alligators
lizards
dinosaurs
crocodiles
Examples

Example 5


Definition
Warm-blooded animals with backbones. Most of them move by walking on fully developed legs.
What is it like?
give milk
young are born alive
most or covered with fur
WORD
MAMMALS
dogs
humans
elephants
cats
whales
cows
Examples

These word maps can also help you discover why a *whale* is a mammal and how it differs from various kinds of fish. You will also discover that the *platypus* is one of the few mammals that lays eggs.

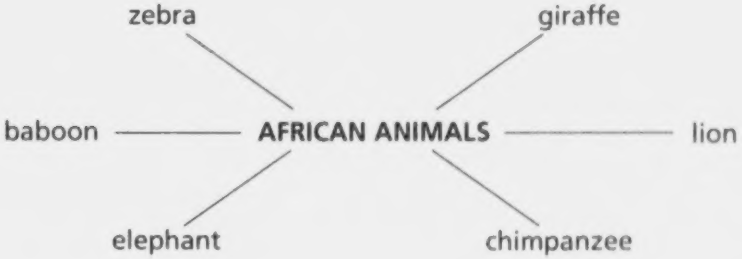
Now practice making your own word web using the following diagram as a guide. The word in the center can be a general term such as DOGS or BIRDS, or it can be some other topic that interests you.


Definition
What is it like?
WORD
Examples

B. Use Word Webs to Expand Vocabulary

Another device that can be used to expand vocabulary is the *word web*. This is a diagram that helps to organize related words whose meanings contribute to our understanding of a central term or topic. Just like a spider's web, a word web has basic strands and linking fibers. You can see this in the following example, which focuses on *African animals*.

Example 6



In this example you see the strands connecting the general term *African animals* with the names of specific kinds of animals. The next step is to get more information about each of these animals. We will find out more about this in the next section.

Word webs can be very effective because they help us grasp new information by relating it to things we already know. Word webs are especially valuable in subject areas such as science and social studies. As you saw in Example 6, a word web is constructed by grouping related words around a central term.

Here is the procedure to follow as you construct word webs:

1. Choose a word or topic of interest.

2. Write the word in the center of a page.

3. Think of other words that are related to the topic. As these words are written, they should be grouped in logical categories around the central term.

4. Talk about the words, focusing especially on the reasons for grouping certain words into categories.

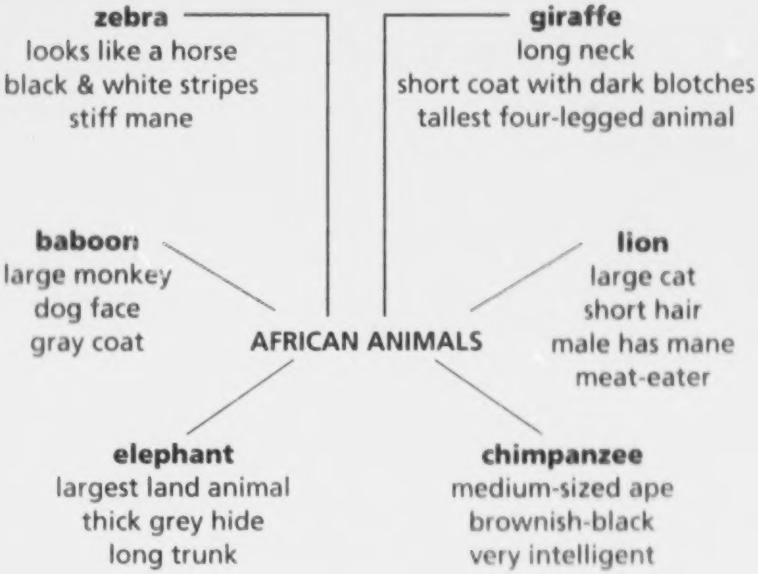
The last step is the most important. The word web itself is only a guide, not an end in itself. It is important not only to become aware of new words but also to discover relationships among words and new meanings of familiar words. It is the follow-up discussion that makes word webs so valuable because it requires us to become actively involved in learning, not merely to fill in blanks on a worksheet.

Practice making a word web using the following diagram as a guide.

C. Use Word Webs for Reading

Word webs can be used *before* we read a selection to help organize our knowledge of the subject. Then, *after* the selection is read, the word web can be checked for accuracy and can be expanded to relate new information to old. For example, if you are going to read a selection about wild animals in Africa, you might begin with a simple web such as the one given earlier in Example 6. Then, after reading more about the subject, you should be able to add more details about each animal. Example 7 shows how the word web can be expanded.

Example 7


zebra
looks like a horse
black & white stripes
stiff mane
giraffe
long neck
short coat with dark blotches
tallest four-legged animal
baboon
large monkey
dog face
gray coat
lion
large cat
short hair
male has mane
meat-eater
AFRICAN ANIMALS
elephant
largest land animal
thick grey hide
long trunk
chimpanzee
medium-sized ape
brownish-black
very intelligent

Example 8 deals with the *solar system*. Some of the words included here are appropriate for students in the early grades, while others are better suited for the later grades. Choose the words that are best for your situation.

Example 8

Sun
temperature
size and distance
helium
solar flares
hydrogen

Planets
Mercury
Venus
Earth
Mars
Jupiter
Saturn
Uranus
Neptune
Pluto

SOLAR SYSTEM

Earth
inner core
outer core
mantle
crust
hydrosphere

Related Terms
orbit
light year
star
moon
celestial

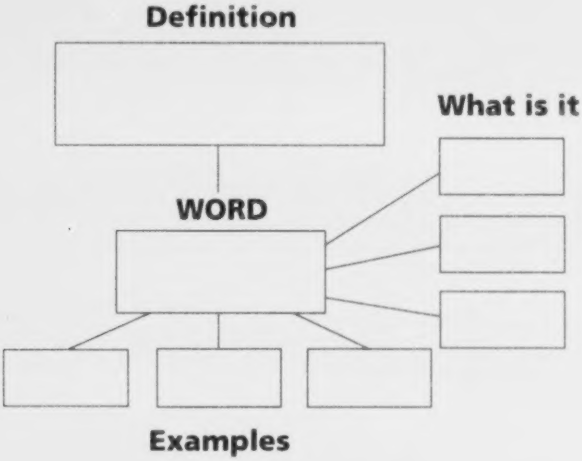
Word maps and word webs are valuable because they require you to work with words and definitions and to form your own conclusions. When you make the effort to understand words and to find relationships among them, you will remember much more than you would if you simply memorized words and definitions.

Week 8. **Check Yourself**

Answer the following questions. Use a separate piece of paper when you need more space.

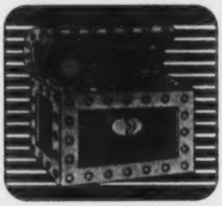
1. Look at your textbooks in subject areas such as science and social studies. Pick some important terms that are discussed in the text and then arrange a Word Map around each topic you choose. Refer to Examples 1 and 2 as models.

Here is the outline of a Word Map. Make more photocopies so you can use them for your own examples.



When you construct a Word Map, you will have to think about the information in the textbook and find a way to organize it so that it becomes meaningful. Consult the glossary in your textbook whenever important or unfamiliar words are encountered.

2. After you have picked some important terms and found specific examples in your Word Map, develop a Word Web like the ones given in Examples 7 and 8. Each of the specific examples should be surrounded by more detailed information that helps to explain or clarify the meaning and importance of the examples.



Week 9

Search for Treasure in Dictionaries and Thesauruses

At some point in our reading we all encounter unfamiliar words that can't be figured out by using the techniques discussed earlier in this book. When we are writing, we may want a word that is more specific and precise than the one we have used. When this happens, it is time to turn to the *dictionary* and the *thesaurus*. These reference books provide a wealth of information about words, and they can add much to our quest for continued vocabulary development. They clarify and refine our understanding of word meanings, and they open up a range of possibilities for using words that are closely related in meaning.

Dictionaries

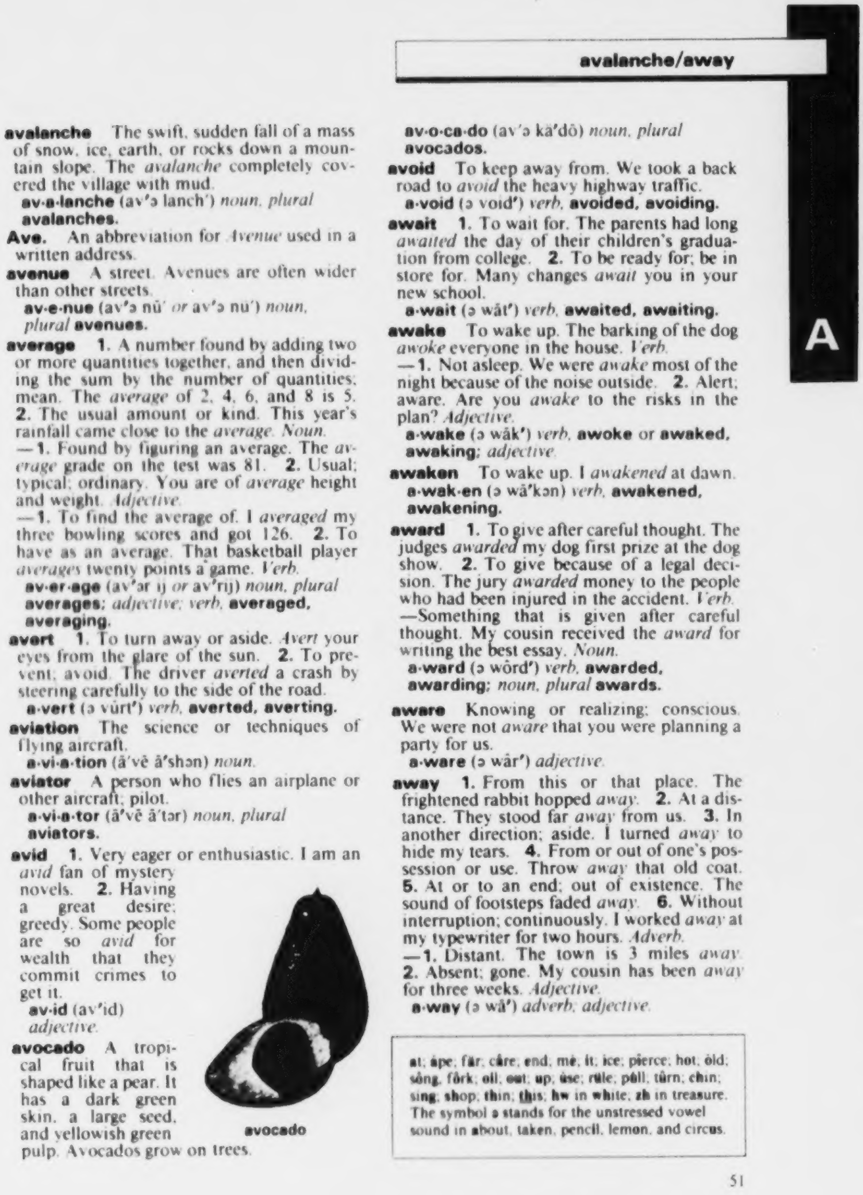
When you look at most dictionaries, you quickly see that many words have more than one meaning. Also, many words can be used as more than one part of speech: noun, verb, adjective, and so on. This immediately broadens your awareness of the range of possibilities of words in the English language. Also, some dictionaries show how words originated in older languages and were gradually adapted to English. Finally, dictionaries can help you understand that words are made up of individual units and that each unit contributes to the *meaning* of the word.

The example on the next page is from a dictionary designed for students in the elementary grades. The **Guide Words** at the top show that words from *avalanche* to *away* are included on this page.

See if you can find

- multiple meanings
- pronunciation guide
- parts of speech

Week 9. Search for Treasure in Dictionaries and Thesauruses



avalanche The swift, sudden fall of a mass of snow, ice, earth, or rocks down a mountain slope. The *avalanche* completely covered the village with mud.
av·a·lanche (av'ə lanch') *noun, plural* **avalanches.**

Ave. An abbreviation for *Avenue* used in a written address.

avenue A street. Avenues are often wider than other streets.
av·e·nue (av'ə nü' *or* av'ə nu') *noun, plural* **avenues.**

average **1.** A number found by adding two or more quantities together, and then dividing the sum by the number of quantities; mean. The *average* of 2, 4, 6, and 8 is 5. **2.** The usual amount or kind. This year's rainfall came close to the *average*. *Noun.*
—**1.** Found by figuring an average. The *average* grade on the test was 81. **2.** Usual; typical; ordinary. You are of *average* height and weight. *Adjective.*
—**1.** To find the average of. I *averaged* my three bowling scores and got 126. **2.** To have as an average. That basketball player *averages* twenty points a game. *Verb.*
av·er·age (av'ər ij *or* av'rij) *noun, plural* **averages;** *adjective; verb,* **averaged, averaging.**

avert **1.** To turn away or aside. *Avert* your eyes from the glare of the sun. **2.** To prevent; avoid. The driver *averted* a crash by steering carefully to the side of the road.
a·vert (ə vûrt') *verb,* **averted, averting.**

aviation The science or techniques of flying aircraft.
a·vi·a·tion (ā'vē ā'shən) *noun.*

aviator A person who flies an airplane or other aircraft; pilot.
a·vi·a·tor (ā'vē ā'tər) *noun, plural* **aviators.**

avid **1.** Very eager or enthusiastic. I am an *avid* fan of mystery novels. **2.** Having a great desire; greedy. Some people are so *avid* for wealth that they commit crimes to get it.
av·id (av'id) *adjective.*

avocado A tropical fruit that is shaped like a pear. It has a dark green skin, a large seed, and yellowish green pulp. Avocados grow on trees.
av·o·ca·do (av'ə kä'dō) *noun, plural* **avocados.**

avocado

avoid To keep away from. We took a back road to *avoid* the heavy highway traffic.
a·void (ə void') *verb,* **avoided, avoiding.**

await **1.** To wait for. The parents had long *awaited* the day of their children's graduation from college. **2.** To be ready for; be in store for. Many changes *await* you in your new school.
a·wait (ə wāt') *verb,* **awaited, awaiting.**

awake To wake up. The barking of the dog *awoke* everyone in the house. *Verb.*
—**1.** Not asleep. We were *awake* most of the night because of the noise outside. **2.** Alert; aware. Are you *awake* to the risks in the plan? *Adjective.*
a·wake (ə wāk') *verb,* **awoke** or **awaked, awaking;** *adjective.*

awaken To wake up. I *awakened* at dawn.
a·wak·en (ə wā'kən) *verb,* **awakened, awakening.**

award **1.** To give after careful thought. The judges *awarded* my dog first prize at the dog show. **2.** To give because of a legal decision. The jury *awarded* money to the people who had been injured in the accident. *Verb.*
—Something that is given after careful thought. My cousin received the *award* for writing the best essay. *Noun.*
a·ward (ə wôrd') *verb,* **awarded, awarding;** *noun, plural* **awards.**

aware Knowing or realizing; conscious. We were not *aware* that you were planning a party for us.
a·ware (ə wâr') *adjective.*

away **1.** From this or that place. The frightened rabbit hopped *away*. **2.** At a distance. They stood far *away* from us. **3.** In another direction; aside. I turned *away* to hide my tears. **4.** From or out of one's possession or use. Throw *away* that old coat. **5.** At or to an end; out of existence. The sound of footsteps faded *away*. **6.** Without interruption; continuously. I worked *away* at my typewriter for two hours. *Adverb.*
—**1.** Distant. The town is 3 miles *away*. **2.** Absent; gone. My cousin has been *away* for three weeks. *Adjective.*
a·way (ə wā') *adverb; adjective.*

at; āpe; fär; câre; end; mē; it; īce; pîerce; hot; ōld; sông; fôrk; oil; out; up; ūse; rüle; pu̇ll; tûrn; chin; sing; shop; thin; this; hw in white; zh in treasure. The symbol ə stands for the unstressed vowel sound in about, taken, pencil, lemon, and circus.

Macmillan School Dictionary 1. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1990

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Each **Main Entry** is given in boldface. The first main entry, *avalanche*, is followed by a **Definition** and an **Example Sentence**. Next, the syllable division of the word is shown, followed by its pronunciation (in parentheses) and then the indication that it is a noun whose plural form is *avalanches*. A **Pronunciation Guide** or **Pronunciation Key** is given at the bottom of the page. By matching the symbols in this guide to the ones used in the word you are looking at, you can determine the correct pronunciation.

Also notice that some words can be used as several different parts of speech and can have more than one meaning. For example, *average* has two meanings when used as a noun, two when used as an adjective, and two more when used as a verb.

> **average** **1.** A number found by adding two or more quantities together, and then dividing the sum by the number of quantities; mean. The *average* of 2, 4, 6, and 8 is 5. **2.** The usual amount or kind. This year's rainfall came close to the *average*. *Noun.*
> —**1.** Found by figuring an average. The *average* grade on the test was 81. **2.** Usual; typical; ordinary. You are of *average* height and weight. *Adjective.*
> —**1.** To find the average of. I *averaged* my three bowling scores and got 126. **2.** To have as an average. That basketball player *averages* twenty points a game. *Verb.*
> **av·er·age** (av'ər ij *or* av'rij) *noun, plural* **averages;** *adjective; verb,* **averaged, averaging.**

Macmillan School Dictionary 1. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1990

• •

Look at the entry for the word *aviator* and answer the following questions.

What definition is given for *aviator*?

____

What synonym is given for this word?

____

What part of speech is the word *aviator*?

____

Compare the word *aviation* with the word *aviator*. Both are nouns. What is the important distinction in the meaning of these words?

____

____

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Now look at the word *away* and answer the following questions.

How many definitions are given for *away* as an adverb?

____

How many definitions are given for *away* as an adjective?

____

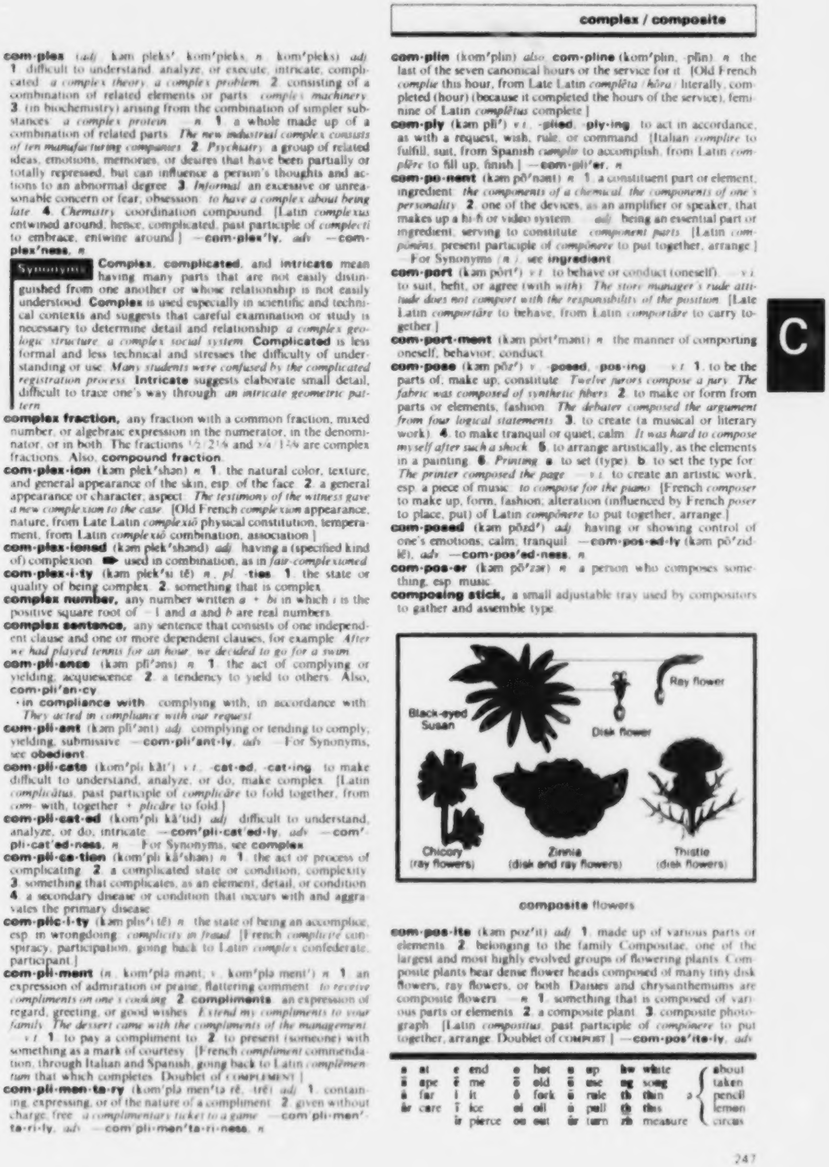
Does the pronunciation change when the word is used as different parts of speech?

____

The example on the next page is from a dictionary designed for high-school students. The guide words show that this page covers words from *complex* through *composite*.

This dictionary gives more information. Can you find references to the language roots of some words?

Word	**Language**
____________	____________
____________	____________



com·plex (*adj* kəm pleks′, kom′pleks; *n* kom′pleks) *adj* **1** difficult to understand, analyze, or execute; intricate; complicated: *a complex theory; a complex problem.* **2** consisting of a combination of related elements or parts: *complex machinery.* **3** (in biochemistry) arising from the combination of simpler substances: *a complex protein.* —*n* **1** a whole made up of a combination of related parts: *The new industrial complex consists of ten manufacturing companies.* **2** *Psychiatry* a group of related ideas, emotions, memories, or desires that have been partially or totally repressed, but can influence a person's thoughts and actions to an abnormal degree. **3** *Informal* an excessive or unreasonable concern or fear; obsession: *to have a complex about being late.* **4** *Chemistry* coordination compound. [Latin *complexus* entwined around, hence, complicated, past participle of *complecti* to embrace, entwine around.] —**com·plex′ly**, *adv* —**com·plex′ness**, *n*

Synonyms **Complex**, **complicated**, and **intricate** mean having many parts that are not easily distinguished from one another or whose relationship is not easily understood. **Complex** is used especially in scientific and technical contexts and suggests that careful examination or study is necessary to determine detail and relationship: *a complex geologic structure; a complex social system.* **Complicated** is less formal and less technical and stresses the difficulty of understanding or use: *Many students were confused by the complicated registration process.* **Intricate** suggests elaborate small detail, difficult to trace one's way through: *an intricate geometric pattern.*

complex fraction, any fraction with a common fraction, mixed number, or algebraic expression in the numerator, in the denominator, or in both. The fractions ½/2¼ and ¾/1⅞ are complex fractions. Also, **compound fraction**.

com·plex·ion (kəm plek′shən) *n* **1** the natural color, texture, and general appearance of the skin, esp. of the face. **2** a general appearance or character; aspect: *The testimony of the witness gave a new complexion to the case.* [Old French *complexion* appearance, nature, from Late Latin *complexiō* physical constitution, temperament, from Latin *complexiō* combination, association.]

com·plex·ioned (kəm plek′shənd) *adj* having a (specified kind of) complexion. ➡ used in combination, as in *fair-complexioned*.

com·plex·i·ty (kəm plek′si tē) *n*, *pl* **-ties 1** the state or quality of being complex. **2** something that is complex.

complex number, any number written *a* + *bi* in which *i* is the positive square root of −1 and *a* and *b* are real numbers.

complex sentence, any sentence that consists of one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses, for example: *After we had played tennis for an hour, we decided to go for a swim.*

com·pli·ance (kəm plī′əns) *n* **1** the act of complying or yielding; acquiescence. **2** a tendency to yield to others. Also, **com·pli′an·cy**.
·**in compliance with** complying with; in accordance with: *They acted in compliance with our request.*

com·pli·ant (kəm plī′ənt) *adj* complying or tending to comply; yielding; submissive. —**com·pli′ant·ly**, *adv* —For Synonyms, see **obedient**.

com·pli·cate (kom′pli kāt′) *v.t.*, **-cat·ed**, **-cat·ing** to make difficult to understand, analyze, or do; make complex. [Latin *complicātus*, past participle of *complicāre* to fold together, from *com-* with, together + *plicāre* to fold.]

com·pli·cat·ed (kom′pli kā′tid) *adj* difficult to understand, analyze, or do; intricate. —**com′pli·cat′ed·ly**, *adv* —**com′pli·cat′ed·ness**, *n* —For Synonyms, see **complex**.

com·pli·ca·tion (kom′pli kā′shən) *n* **1** the act or process of complicating. **2** a complicated state or condition; complexity. **3** something that complicates, as an element, detail, or condition. **4** a secondary disease or condition that occurs with and aggravates the primary disease.

com·plic·i·ty (kəm plis′i tē) *n* the state of being an accomplice, esp. in wrongdoing: *complicity in fraud.* [French *complicité* conspiracy, participation, going back to Latin *complex* confederate, participant.]

com·pli·ment (*n*. kom′plə mənt; *v*. kom′plə ment′) *n* **1** an expression of admiration or praise; flattering comment: *to receive compliments on one's cooking.* **2** **compliments** an expression of regard, greeting, or good wishes: *Extend my compliments to your family. The dessert came with the compliments of the management.* —*v.t.* **1** to pay a compliment to. **2** to present (someone) with something as a mark of courtesy. [French *compliment* commendation, through Italian and Spanish, going back to Latin *complēmentum* that which completes. Doublet of COMPLEMENT.]

com·pli·men·ta·ry (kom′plə men′tə rē, -trē) *adj* **1** containing, expressing, or of the nature of a compliment. **2** given without charge; free: *a complimentary ticket to a game.* —**com′pli·men′ta·ri·ly**, *adv* —**com′pli·men′ta·ri·ness**, *n*

com·plin (kom′plin) *also* **com·pline** (kom′plin, -plīn) *n* the last of the seven canonical hours or the service for it. [Old French *complie* this hour, from Late Latin *complēta (hōra)* literally, completed (hour) (because it completed the hours of the service), feminine of Latin *complētus* complete.]

com·ply (kəm plī′) *v.i.*, **-plied**, **-ply·ing** to act in accordance, as with a request, wish, rule, or command. [Italian *complire* to fulfill, suit, from Spanish *cumplir* to accomplish, from Latin *complēre* to fill up, finish.] —**com·pli′er**, *n*

com·po·nent (kəm pō′nənt) *n* **1** a constituent part or element; ingredient: *the components of a chemical; the components of one's personality.* **2** one of the devices, as an amplifier or speaker, that makes up a hi-fi or video system. —*adj* being an essential part or ingredient; serving to constitute: *component parts.* [Latin *compōnēns*, present participle of *compōnere* to put together, arrange.] —For Synonyms (*n*.), see **ingredient**.

com·port (kəm pôrt′) *v.t.* to behave or conduct (oneself). —*v.i.* to suit, befit, or agree (with *with*): *The store manager's rude attitude does not comport with the responsibility of the position.* [Late Latin *comportāre* to behave, from Latin *comportāre* to carry together.]

com·port·ment (kəm pôrt′mənt) *n* the manner of comporting oneself; behavior; conduct.

com·pose (kəm pōz′) *v.*, **-posed**, **-pos·ing** —*v.t.* **1** to be the parts of; make up; constitute: *Twelve jurors compose a jury. The fabric was composed of synthetic fibers.* **2** to make or form from parts or elements; fashion: *The debater composed the argument from four logical statements.* **3** to create (a musical or literary work). **4** to make tranquil or quiet; calm: *It was hard to compose myself after such a shock.* **5** to arrange artistically, as the elements in a painting. **6** *Printing* **a** to set (type). **b** to set the type for: *The printer composed the page.* —*v.i.* to create an artistic work, esp. a piece of music: *to compose for the piano.* [French *composer* to make up, form, fashion; alteration (influenced by French *poser* to place, put) of Latin *compōnere* to put together, arrange.]

com·posed (kəm pōzd′) *adj* having or showing control of one's emotions; calm; tranquil. —**com·pos·ed·ly** (kəm pō′zid lē), *adv* —**com·pos′ed·ness**, *n*

com·pos·er (kəm pō′zər) *n* a person who composes something, esp. music.

composing stick, a small adjustable tray used by compositors to gather and assemble type.

composite flowers

com·pos·ite (kəm poz′it) *adj* **1** made up of various parts or elements. **2** belonging to the family Compositae, one of the largest and most highly evolved groups of flowering plants. Composite plants bear dense flower heads composed of many tiny disk flowers, ray flowers, or both. Daisies and chrysanthemums are composite flowers. —*n* **1** something that is composed of various parts or elements. **2** a composite plant. **3** composite photograph. [Latin *compositus*, past participle of *compōnere* to put together, arrange. Doublet of COMPOST.] —**com·pos′ite·ly**, *adv*

a	at	e	end	o	hot	u	up	hw	white	ə	about
ā	ape	ē	me	ō	old	ū	use	ng	song		taken
ä	far	i	it	ô	fork	ü	rule	th	thin		pencil
âr	care	ī	ice	oi	oil	ů	pull	t͟h	this		lemon
		îr	pierce	ou	out	ûr	turn	zh	measure		circus

C

Macmillan School Dictionary 3. New York: Macmillan/McGraw Hill, 1993.

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Here you can see some of the most prominent features found in dictionaries specifically designed for the upper grades. For example, the first entry for the word *complex* has three definitions as an adjective and four definitions as a noun. Also notice the **etymology** given in brackets, which shows how the word entered English from other languages. In this case, the English word *complex* originated in the Latin *complexus*, meaning "entwined around." At the end of the definition you see that the adverb form is *complexly* and that the adjective can be changed to the noun *complexness*. (Notice that another noun form, *complexity*, is given as a separate entry.) After the definitions, a separate section is devoted to a discussion of the slight differences in meaning of the synonyms *complex*, *complicated*, and *intricate*. In many dictionaries, synonyms and antonyms are often given to clarify and elaborate on the meaning of certain words.

Now look at some of the other entries and answer the following questions.

• •

The word *complexion* has two meanings, one specific and one more general. Write each meaning below.

specific:

____

general:

____

At the end of the entry you see that *complexion* was taken into English from Old French, but the French word itself was taken from a word in an even earlier language. In what language did *complexion* originate, and what was its meaning?

____

____

As you see, the original meanings were much broader than the ones we use today. Many words have changed meaning over the centuries, some becoming broader, others more specific.

• •

Look at the entry for the word *complicate*.

In what language did the word originate?

____

What was the original meaning of the word?

____

____

Look at the entry for the word *compliment*.

How many definitions are given for the noun?

____

How many definitions are given for the verb?

____

List the languages in which *compliment* was used before it appeared in English:

____

Look at the entry for the word *compose*.

How many definitions are given for *compose* as a transitive verb (v.t.)?

____

How is it possible for the same word to be used in sentences that talk about the makeup of a jury, the organization of a debate, the creation of a musical work, and the process of setting type on a page? You may be able to get a clue if you look at the etymology of the word *compose*. Give the meanings for the word in the two languages that are cited as sources.

French:

____

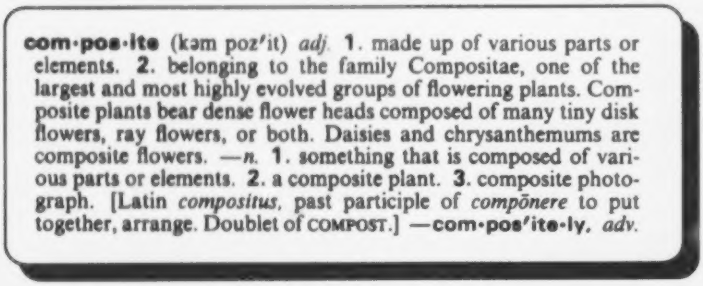
Latin:

____

Now you see that all the definitions of *compose*, as it is used in English, have something to do with putting things together and arranging them. All these various shades of meaning can be traced back to the Latin original. This will not be true of every word you look up, but often you find that some part of the original meaning of a word is still present in the word today.

In the entry for *composite* you find several definitions of the word as an adjective as well as a noun. There is also an illustration to supplement the specific term *composite plant*, which was given as the second noun form of the word. At this level, dictionaries usually give illustrations only when a particular entry can be clarified by a picture.

Finally, there is one other detail worth noticing on this page. Every word begins with the first syllable *com-*, which originated in a Latin word meaning "together" or "with." You can see that all the words on this page have something to do with joining one thing *with* another thing (or with several things). This knowledge not only helps you spell each word correctly; it also helps you understand the meaning more fully.



com·pos·ite (kəm poz'it) *adj.* **1**. made up of various parts or elements. **2**. belonging to the family Compositae, one of the largest and most highly evolved groups of flowering plants. Composite plants bear dense flower heads composed of many tiny disk flowers, ray flowers, or both. Daisies and chrysanthemums are composite flowers. —*n.* **1**. something that is composed of various parts or elements. **2**. a composite plant. **3**. composite photograph. [Latin *compositus*, past participle of *compōnere* to put together, arrange. Doublet of COMPOST.] —**com·pos'ite·ly**, *adv.*

Macmillan School Dictionary 3. New York: Macmillan/McGraw Hill, 1993.

Thesauruses

The word *thesaurus* originated in the Greek language and was later taken into Latin before entering English. (The Latin form of the plural is *thesauri*; the English plural is *thesauruses*.) A thesaurus was originally a treasure or a storehouse, and this gives us a good idea of what the word means today: a storehouse of words that are matched with synonyms and antonyms.

A thesaurus can help you avoid the overuse of certain words such as *nice* or *fun* or *go*, and it can help you find a word that may be more precise than the one you used in the first place. For example, we often say that something is *funny*, but it is much more interesting to use a precise word such as *amusing*, *humorous*, *witty*, *comical*, *hilarious*, or *ridiculous*. Each word is ideally suited to fit a particular situation.

Two basic designs are used in thesauruses today. You may find either type for younger or older students, but those we have looked at usually follow one plan for the early grades and another for the upper grades.

Groupings under Main Entries

Thesauruses for younger students often contain a limited number of main entries which are usually important words that are very general and are frequently used. These are often familiar verbs such as *ask*, *go*, and *look* or adjectives such as *bad* and *good* or *fast* and *slow*.

After each main entry, many thesauruses provide a definition and example sentences showing how that word is used. Then there are several synonyms, each with its own definition and example sentences. Here is the beginning of the information for the word *break* in a thesaurus for the early grades:

break	*Break* means suddenly come apart or force something to come apart. Some dishes *break* if you drop them. A cook breaks an egg to open it . . . .
crack	*Crack* means to break, but not into pieces. A stone may *crack* a window, but the glass will stay in one piece. A piece of wood can *crack* without falling apart. Be careful not to *crack* a plate.
shatter smash	*Shatter* means to break into many small pieces. *Smash* means break by force, too, but not always into pieces. A driver who hits a tree might *shatter* or *smash* the windshield. The driver might *smash* a fender, but he or she would not *shatter* it.

From *Roget's Children's Thesaurus*. New York: HarperCollins, 1991, p. 40.

Several more synonyms such as *crush*, *split*, and *fracture* are listed as well.

If you want synonyms for *smash* or *shatter*, you simply look for these words in their normal places in the alphabetical listing. In each case you will find a message directing you to look under the main entry, *break*. In some thesauruses, all words are listed in alphabetical order in the book itself. In others, you may have to look for *smash* or *shatter* in an index at the back of the book; there you will be told to look for the main entry.

The idea here is that certain words such as *break* or *go* or *big* are used very often because their meanings are very general. By organizing main entries around such words, these thesauruses show you that there can be several other possibilities that mean almost the same but may be more precise or colorful. Often you will find some antonyms at the end of the listing as well.

All Entries in Alphabetical Order

In many thesauruses designed for older students, all words are treated as equally important and are listed in alphabetical order. Each main entry is usually followed by a brief definition and sometimes a phrase or sentence showing how the word is used. Then several synonyms are listed, and the entry may end with a few antonyms as well. For example, if you look at the entry for *laugh*, you may find something like the following:

laugh *vb* to show mirth, joy, or scorn with a smile and a usually explosive sound <*laughed* at all the funny things that happened>
syn chortle, chuckle, giggle, guffaw, hee-haw, snicker

From *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Thesaurus*. Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, 1988, p. 441.

If you look at the entries for *chortle* or *chuckle*, you will usually find that the complete entry for *laugh* is repeated. Also, the information may show that **laugh** is the main term but that other words such as *giggle* and *guffaw* are also possible. This means that you can find all the information you need under any word you look up; you don't have to turn back to the main entry.

Each type of thesaurus has its merits; you can choose the one you like best. In any case, a thesaurus can be a valuable tool that makes you aware of the wide range of possibilities as you strive for more precise or colorful words to use in your own writing.

Week 9. **Check Yourself**

Answer the following questions. Use a separate piece of paper when you need more space.

1. Look at the introduction to your dictionary and read the information explaining how to use the book. Make sure you understand how the page is set up and how information is presented. Get a feel for all the information that may help you later. For example, is there a pronunciation key? How will that help you? Is there an illustration that clarifies a certain word? Are there different entries for a single word that may be used as more than one part of speech?

As you look through the introduction to your dictionary, check off the features that you find. Not all of these features may be present in every dictionary.

Guide Words ____________________

Main Entries ____________________

Syllable Division ________________

Pronunciation ______________

Parts of Speech ______________

Definitions ______________

Etymology ______________

Synonyms ______________

Pronunciation Key ______________

2. Look up the word *ground* in your dictionary. There should be several definitions, and some of them should specify the word *grounds* as well. Read the following sentences and then write the definition of *grounds* that fits in each case.

The building was surrounded by beautiful *grounds*.

Definition:

____

What *grounds* do you have for believing their story?

Definition:

____

Who threw the coffee *grounds* in the sink?

Definition:

____

3. See if your dictionary includes synonyms or antonyms as part of the definitions for some words, especially adjectives and verbs. Do you find some synonyms or antonyms that are unfamiliar? If so, look them up.

You might begin by looking for synonyms and antonyms for the following words. Then look for others that interest you.

fast:

____

easy:

____

fly (verb):

____

climb:

____

4. Notice that some words can be used in phrases called *idioms*. These are expressions which have meanings that apply in specific situations or that have unusual characteristics.

Verbs and nouns are often used in idioms. For example, a familiar word such as *wash* can be used in idioms such as "to come out in the wash" or "to wash out" or "to wash your hands of something."

Look in your dictionary and see if it includes any idioms for the following words. Write each idiom and its definition.

close: to close in________________________

to close out__________________________

drop: to drop off________________________

____

____

fill:__________________________________

____

____

5. Think of some everyday words that you use very often: *nice*, *fun*, *go*, *do*, and so on. Look in your thesaurus to find synonyms that are more precise than these general words. Use each synonym in a sentence that suits its particular meaning. If definitions or example sentences are not provided in your thesaurus, look up the words in your dictionary to find enough information to make each meaning clear. Which words will you try to use to replace some of these common words?

Common Words	**Replacements**

Week 10

Learn More about Word Structure

Roots and Affixes

Today's English contains thousands of words that originated in other languages. In fact, most of the words we use today have been borrowed from other languages, especially Latin, Greek, and French.

Although some complete words have been borrowed from these languages, many more English words are built on *roots* taken from Latin and Greek in particular.

A **root** is a part of an English word that has been borrowed from a word in another language. Each root retains the meaning of the original word, but a root is not a complete word in itself. It must be combined with affixes or other roots in order to make sense in the English language.

This week we will look at a few of the many English words that are built on Latin and Greek roots. Also remember that in Week 9 we mentioned the term *etymology*, the study of the history of words as they have entered English from other languages over the centuries. In dictionaries designed for high-school and college students, you will often find information about the etymology of many words, showing how they originated in Greek or Latin or other languages. Take advantage of this information in your dictionary; it will be most helpful as you look at the words on the following pages.

A. English Words Built on Latin Roots

An enormous number of English words can be traced back to the Latin language, which was originally spoken throughout the Roman Empire more than 2000 years ago. Here are some of these Latin words and their original meanings, followed by English words built on each of the Latin roots.

Latin Verbs

capere, cept- (to take, seize): **cap**ture, ac**cept**

dicere (to speak): **dic**tate

ducere (to lead): con**duc**t

facere (to make or do): **fac**tory

migrare (to move from one place to another): **migra**te *mittere, miss-* (to send): trans**mit**, **miss**ion

portare (to carry): trans**port**

scribere, script- (to write): de**scrib**e, sub**script**ion

spectare (to watch): **spect**ator

Latin Nouns

caput (head): **cap**tain

equus (horse): **equ**estrian

manus (hand): **man**ual

mare (the sea): **mar**ine

navis (ship): **nav**igate

pes, ped- (foot): **ped**al

terra (the earth): **terr**itory

Latin Adjectives

bene (good): **bene**fit

brevis (small, short): **brev**ity

magnus (large): **magn**itude

mal (bad): **mal**ady

tardus (slow): re**tard**

Word Structure

In earlier weeks we saw that affixes could be added to base words that had clear meanings in English: *fair* and *unfair* or *hope* and *hopeful*, for example. This week we see that affixes can be added to word roots taken from other languages. For example, the word *accept* is made up of the prefix *ac-* and the root *-cept*, which is taken from the Latin verb *capere* meaning "to take or seize." Neither the prefix *ac-* nor the root *-cept* has any meaning in the English language if it is viewed by itself. However, both word parts did have meaning in Latin. Most importantly, when they are joined they form the word *accept*, which does have meaning in English: "to approve of something or receive it willingly." Now you see how the principles of word structure introduced in Weeks 2 and 3 can be applied to affixes and roots taken from ancient languages and adapted to today's English.

Here are a few English words that are built on Latin roots:

captive portable beneficial inspect pedestal

Next you see some Latin roots and meanings. After you look at each root, refer to the five words given above and write the English word that is derived from the Latin root.

bene (good): ______________________________

capere (to seize, take): ______________________

pes, ped- (foot): ___________________________

portare (to carry): __________________________

spectare (to watch): ________________________

B. English Words Built on Greek Roots

The Greek language is even older than Latin. In fact, many Latin words were borrowed from Greek. Greek words also play important roles in the formation of many English words. These Greek words are especially valuable because their meaning usually remains constant: We often have a good idea of the meaning of an English word if we know the meaning of its Greek components.

Here are some Greek words that are important in the formation of English words. With a partner see how many words you can think of based on these Greek roots.

astr- (*aster, astron,* star): **astr**onomy

auto- (*autos,* same, self): **auto**biography

bio- (*bios,* life): **bio**logy

circ- (*kirkos,* circle or ring): **circ**ular

geo- (*gē* , the earth): **geo**graphy

graph- (*graphein,* to write): **graph**ic

hydro- (*hydor,* water): **hydro**electric

metr- (*metron,* measure): **metr**ic

micro- (*mikros,* small): **micro**scope

naut- (*nautēs,* sailor): **naut**ical

phon- (*phonē,* sound): tele**phon**e

photo- (*phōs,* light): **photo**graph

tech- (*technē,* craft or skill): **tech**nical

tele- (*tēle,* far off): **tele**graph

therm- (*thermē,* heat): **therm**ometer

Word Structure

The word *thermometer* shows how two Greek word parts can be combined to form a word we use in English today. As you saw in the preceding list, the Greek word *thermē* meant "heat" and the Greek word *metron* meant "measure." When they are combined, they form the word *thermometer*, which of course did not exist in the original Greek language but is used today to name a device that measures heat.

• •

Here are a few English words that are built on Greek roots:

circulate technology microphone
photocopy astronaut

Next you see some Greek roots and meanings. After you look at each root, look back at the five words given above and write the English word that is derived from the Greek root.

astr- (*aster*, *astron*, star):

____

circ- (*kirkos*, circle or ring):

____

micro- (*mikros*, small):

____

photo- (*phōs*, light):

____

tech- (*technē*, craft or skill):

____

• • •

The Greek Suffix -logy

A most important Greek word is *logos*, which originally meant "word, thought, reason." This Greek word forms a part of English words such as *dialogue* and *logic* and *apologize*. It is also the source of the suffix *-logy*, which means "the study of a subject or the body of knowledge about that subject." This suffix is found in many words that name various branches of science such as *biology*, *zoology*, *paleontology*, and *psychology*.

Also notice that the suffix *-logy* identifies specific areas of study, while the suffix *-ist* identifies the person who studies a certain subject:

A *biologist* studies *biology*.
A *zoologist* studies *zoology*.
A *paleontologist* studies *paleontology*.
A *psychologist* studies *psychology*.

A Word of Caution

Whenever we look at English words built on Latin and Greek roots, we often find that knowledge of the meanings of these roots can help us understand the meanings of English words. For example, when we looked at the Latin word *facere* we could see that its meaning was clear in the word *factory* (a place in which we *make* things), and the meaning of *spectare* was clear in the word *spectator* (someone who *watches* something).

However, even though Latin and Greek words are important in English, we should not *always* expect to find a clear connection between the original word and its modern counterpart. Often this is because the meanings of some English words have changed over the centuries, sometimes becoming broader than the original word and sometimes becoming narrower. However, even when the meaning of a particular Greek or Latin word is not immediately apparent, it helps to be aware that it is part of an English word. This is especially valuable when we analyze word structure and search for ways to understand the spellings of difficult words.

Week 10. **Check Yourself**

Answer the following questions. Use a separate piece of paper when you need more space.

1. Listed below are some English words that have developed from Latin or Greek. In your dictionary, find the language in which each word originated. Also notice what the word originally meant, if such information is provided. The first example is given.

	Language	**Original Meaning**
accident	*Latin*	*chance, happening, going back to*
contain	________	______________________
cosmic	________	______________________
exercise	________	______________________
galaxy	________	______________________
metaphor	________	______________________

	Language	**Original Meaning**
method	________	____________________________
predict	________	____________________________
revolve	________	____________________________
transfer	________	____________________________

2. As you encounter new words and look for information in your dictionary, notice the etymology of each word (if this information is provided). How does an understanding of the original form of the word help you understand it more fully? Is the original meaning of the word still relevant to today's word, or has the meaning changed over the centuries? Does the word have a more *specific* meaning today, or has it become more *general*. Use the following outline to guide you.

Word: ____

Original meaning: ________________________________

____

Today's meaning: _________________________________

____

How has it changed? _______________________________

____

Week 11

Discover Latin and Greek Word Families

As we saw last week, Latin and Greek roots must be combined with other word parts in order to create words that have meaning in the English language. In many cases, these roots are combined with prefixes and suffixes to create English words. We will begin by looking at some of the most important Latin prefixes that have been combined with roots to form complete words.

A. Some Important Latin Prefixes

In earlier weeks we saw that certain affixes are encountered over and over in English words. In addition to familiar prefixes such as *un-* and *dis*, we also find a number of Latin words that are often used as prefixes.

Two of the most important Latin words are *in* (meaning "in, into") and *ex* (meaning "out of, away from"). These words are prepositions in their own right, but they are also often used as prefixes. When this happens, they are sometimes *absorbed* into the following roots to make pronunciation easier. This means that the spelling of the prefix *in-* changes to *im-* and the spelling of *ex-* changes to *e-* before certain consonants.

in-: **in**clude, **in**gest, **in**sert, **in**volve
im-: **im**port, **im**merse, **im**plant, **im**migrate

ex-: **ex**port, **ex**hale, **ex**clude
e-: **e**migrate, **e**lude, **e**ject

The Latin prepositions *ad* (to, toward) and *cum* (with, together) are used as prefixes as well. These are also absorbed prefixes with a variety of spellings.

ad (ac-, af-, ap-, as-, at-)

advance, **ad**mit, **ad**mire, **ad**just
accomplish, **ac**count, **ac**quire, **ac**commodate
afford, **af**fect, **af**firm, **af**flict
appear, **ap**point, **ap**ply, **ap**proach
assume, **as**cend, **as**semble, **as**sign
attain, **at**tend, **at**tract, **at**tempt

cum (com-, col-, con-)

combine, **com**mit, **com**plex, **com**pute
collect, **col**lapse, **col**laborate, **col**lide
connect, **con**serve, **con**sider, **con**sist

Several other Latin prepositions are also used as prefixes. Most of these words are not absorbed into the following root and their spellings remain unchanged. The only exception in the following list is *sub-*, which changes to *sup-* before roots beginning with the letter *p*. (The Latin word *prae* is consistently spelled *pre-* when it is used as a prefix in English words.)

extra (outside, beyond): **extra**ordinary, **extra**curricular, **extra**vagant, **extra**sensory

inter (between, among): **inter**fere, **inter**cept, **inter**ior, **inter**nal, **inter**national, **inter**vene

post (after): **post**pone, **post**erior, **post**erity, **post**mortem

prae, pre- (before, in front of): **pre**fix, **pre**mature, **pre**view, **pre**fer, **pre**pare, **pre**cede

sub, sup- (under, beneath): **sub**marine, **sub**due, **sub**ject, **sub**vert, **sub**stitute, **sub**ordinate, **sub**divide, **sup**ply, **sup**port, **sup**plement

super (above): **super**ior, **super**vise, **super**lative, **super**sonic

trans (across, over): **trans**port, **trans**act, **trans**form, **trans**mit, **trans**late, **trans**plant

Here are a few words that involve the prefixes you just saw. Give the definition for each word and explain how the prefix affects the meaning. Use your dictionary whenever you need to. The first example is already given.

extradite: to send someone *beyond* the boundaries of one state to face prosecution in another state.

predict: ______

submerge: ______

inhale: ______

transfer: ______

intersect: ______

B. Word Families Built on Latin Roots

Here are some of the Latin words included in the list given last week. Each word provides the root for a family of related words. Notice that each root is combined with prefixes or suffixes or sometimes both.

Roots from Latin Verbs

cap-, *cept-* (*capere*, to take, seize): **cap**ture, **cap**tive, **cap**able, **cap**acity, ac**cept**, ex**cept**, per**cept**ion, inter**cept**, re**cept**ion

dic- (*dicere*, to say, speak): **dic**tate, **dic**tator, pre**dic**t, contra**dic**t, e**dic**t, **dic**tion

duc- (*ducere*, to lead): con**duc**t, in**duc**t, pro**duc**t, pro**duce**, pro**duc**tion

fac- (*facere*, to make or do): **fac**tory, **fac**tor, manu**fac**ture, bene**fac**tor, **fac**ile, **fac**ility, **fac**simile

migr- (*migrare*, to move from one place to another): **migr**ate, im**migr**ate, e**migr**ate, im**migr**ation, **migr**atory

mit-, *miss-* (*mittere*, to send): trans**mit**, per**mit**, ad**mit**, com**mit**, e**mit**, **miss**ion, dis**miss**, co**miss**ion, trans**miss**ion

port- (*portare*, to carry): trans**port**, im**port**, ex**port**, **port**able, de**port**, op**port**unity, sup**port**, re**port** *scrib-, script-* (*scribere*, to write): **scrib**e, **scrib**ble, de**scrib**e, pre**scrib**e, sub**scrib**e, tran**scrib**e, **script**, de**script**ion, pre**script**ion, sub**script**ion

• •

Here are a few words built on the roots you just saw. Give the meaning for each word and explain how the root contributes to the meaning. Use your dictionary whenever you need to.

captivate:

____

conductor:

____

migration:

____

omission:

____

• •

Roots from Latin Nouns

capit-, *capt-* (*caput*, head): **capit**al, de**capit**ate, **capt**ain

manu- (*manus*, hand): **manu**al, **manu**facturer, **manu**script

mar- (*mare*, the sea): **mar**ine, **mar**itime, sub**mar**ine

nav- (*navis*, ship): **nav**y, **nav**al, **nav**igate, **nav**igator

ped- (*pes*, foot; pl. *pedis*): **ped**al, **ped**estrian, **ped**estal

terr- (*terra*, earth): **terr**ace, **terr**itory, **terr**estrial, extra**terr**estrial

……

Here are a few words built on the roots you just saw. Give the meaning for each word and explain how the root contributes to the meaning. Use your dictionary whenever you need to.

terrain:

caption:

mariner:

pedicure:

Roots from Latin Adjectives

bene (good): **bene**fit, **bene**ficial, **bene**ficiary, **bene**volent

brevis (small, short): **brev**ity, ab**brev**iate, **brie**f

magnus (large): **magn**itude, **magn**animous, **magn**ificence

mal (bad): **mal**ady, **mal**ice, **mal**evolent, **mal**ignant

tardus (slow): re**tard**, **tard**y

* * *

Here are a few words built on the roots you just saw. Give the meaning for each word and explain how the root contributes to the meaning. Use your dictionary whenever you need to.

beneficent:

____

malicious:

____

retardation:

____

abbreviation:

____

* * *

C. Number Words Built on Latin Roots

Many English words that have to do with numbers are based on Latin words. Here are some of the most familiar prefixes that denote number, followed by the complete Latin word and several other words that are related.

uni- (L *unum*, one): unit, union, universe, unify, uniform *bi-* (L *bini*, two): bicycle, binary, biannual, biceps, bifocals

tri- (L *tres*, three): triangle, tricycle, triple, triathlon, triceratops, trilateral

quad-, *quar-* (L *quattuor*, four): quadrangle, quadruplets, quadrant, quart, quarter, quartet

quin- (L *quinque*, five): quintet, quintuplets, quintile

sex- (L *sex*, six): sextet, sextuplets, sextant

sept- (L *septem*, seven): September, septet, septuagenarian

oct- (L *octo*, eight): October, octet, octagon, octopus, octogenarian, octosyllable

nov- (L *novem*, nine): November

dec- (L *decem*, ten): December, decade, decathlon, decennial

cent- (L *centum*, hundred): cent, century, centennial, centigrade,

Originally, the Roman calendar contained only ten months, so September, October, November, and December were in fact the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth months of the year. When the twelve-month calendar was introduced, the original names were retained although the location of these four months changed.

Here are some words built on the roots you just saw. Give the definition for each word and show how the root affects the meaning.

bicentennial:

unity:

triplicate:

quadruped:

centimeter:

D. Word Families Built on Greek Roots

The following word families are built on Greek roots that were introduced last week. With a partner see if you can think of other words that build on these roots.

astr- (*aster, astron*, star): **astro**nomy, **astro**naut, **aster**oid, **astro**nomical, **astro**physics

auto- (*autos*, same, self): **auto**biography, **auto**matic, **auto**mobile, **auto**cratic, **auto**nomous

bio- (*bios*, life): **bio**logy, **bio**graphy, **bio**physics, **bio**sphere, **bio**chemistry, **bio**degradable

circ- (*kirkos*, circle or ring): **circ**le, **circ**ular, **circ**ulate, en**circ**le

geo- (*gē* the earth): **geo**graphy, **geo**logy, **geo**logic, **geo**metry, **geo**physics, **geo**chemistry

graph- (*graphein*, to write): **graph**, **graph**ic, **graph**ite, bio**graph**y, autobio**graph**y

hydro- (from *hydor*, water): **hydro**electric, **hydr**aulic, **hydr**ology, **hydr**oplane, **hydr**ogen

metr-, meter (*metron*, measure), **meter**, **metr**ic, speedo**meter**, alti**meter,** chrono**meter**, kilo**meter**.

micro- (*mikros*, small): **micro**scope, **micro**phone, **micro**meter, **micro**computer, **micro**dot, **micro**surgery, **micro**be

naut- (*nautēs*, sailor): astro**naut**, cosmo**naut**, **naut**ical *phon-* (*phonē*, sound): **phon**ics, **phon**etic, **phon**ograph, micro**phone**, homo**phone**, tele**phone**

photo- (*phōs*, light): **photo**graph, **photo**electric, **photo**copy, **photo**journalism, tele**photo**

tech- (*technē*, craft or skill): **tech**nical, **tech**nique, **tech**nology

tele- (*tēle*, far off): **tele**phone, **tele**vision, **tele**graph, **tele**scope, **tele**communication

therm- (*thermē*, heat): **therm**ometer, **therm**al, **therm**onuclear, **therm**odynamics, hypo**therm**ia

Some words appear more than once because they combine two of the roots included in this list. For example, the word *biography* combines *bio-* (life) with *graph-* (write): a *biography* is a book written about someone's life. Also remember that the suffix *-logy* comes from the Greek word *logos* and refers to the study of a subject or the body of knowledge about a subject (as in *biology* and *geology*).

Here are some words involving the Greek roots you just saw. Give the definition for each word and explain how the root affects the meaning. Use your dictionary whenever you need to.

circuit:

astrology:

photochemical:

thermography:

phonology:

Place words that you want to remember in your vocabulary notebook.

E. Words in Modern Science and Technology

You have seen that Latin and Greek roots provide the basis for an enormous number of words we use every day in the English language. There is one particular area in which these roots are especially important: the world of modern technology.

Here are some familiar technical words built on Greek roots. Most of the roots were given earlier; a few others are explained as they appear. Notice how the basis for the modern scientific meaning of these words is often found in their roots.

astronaut: literally, a "star-sailor"; someone who sails (*-naut*) among the stars (*astro-*).

cryosurgery: a type of surgery in which the tissue to be operated on is first made very cold (*cryo*). In fact, the words *surgeon* and *surgery* originated in the Greek words *cheir ergon*, which meant "to work or do something by hand."

cyclone: a storm in which winds rotate in a circle (*cyclo-*).

geometry: literally, measuring (*metr-*) the earth (*geo-*).

helicopter: a machine whose propeller blades move in a spiral. The Greek word *heliko* meant "spiral" and *pteron* meant "wing." A "*heliko pteron*" is a "spiral-winged" machine.

microscope: an instrument used to look at (*-scope*) things that are very small (*micro-*).

technology: the body of knowledge (*-logy*) about the craft or skill needed to do things (*techno-*).

telegraph: an instrument that allows you to send writing (*-graph*) over a long distance to people far away (*tele-*).

telephone: an instrument used to carry sound (*-phone*) over long distances to people far away (*tele-*).

telescope: an instrument used to look at (*-scope*) things that are far away (*tele-*).

Words That Combine Latin and Greek

The following words combine Greek and Latin roots. Some of the Latin words that have not been discussed earlier will be explained as they appear.

automobile: a machine that is able to move (*-mobile*) by itself (*auto-*). The word *mobile* originated in the Latin *mobilis*, which is a form of the verb *movere* meaning "to move."

microcomputer: a small (*micro-*) machine that is able to make calculations (*-computer*) very quickly. The Latin verb *computare* means "to count or make calculations; to consider."

television: a device that allows you to see (*-vision*) pictures that originate far away (*tele-*). The word *vision* is a form of the Latin verb *videre*, which meant "to see."

Here are a few words that relate to technology. Give the definition for each word and explain how the Latin or Greek roots contribute to the meaning.

telemetry: ______________________________

____

photosensitive: __________________________

____

microelectrode: __________________________

____

autoimmune: _____________________________

____

F. Conclusion

As you have probably noticed, the search for Latin and Greek roots in English words can be almost endless. This week we have focused on roots that clearly contribute to the meaning of words we use today. Other English words are built on roots whose significance is less obvious because spellings and meanings have changed as English combined words from different sources over the centuries. In any case, an awareness of the role of word roots can contribute much to our understanding of word structure as well as to meaning.

Let's end by looking at a large family of words built on roots from the Latin verb *spectare*, which means "to watch, observe, look at." As you see, the spelling of the root varies slightly from *spec-* and *spect-* to *spic-*. This is because Latin verbs are themselves very complicated and exist in a number of forms to show different tenses (present, past, future) and voices (active or passive, for example).

Prefix/Root	Root/Suffix	Prefix/Root/Suffix
ex**pect**	**spect**er	in**spect**ion
in**spect**	**spect**acle	re**spect**able
re**spect**	**spect**acular	per**spect**ive
su**spect**	**spect**ator	pro**spect**or
pro**spect**	**spect**rum	ex**pect**ation
disre**spect**	**spec**ial	e**spec**ially
retro**spect**	**spec**ies	re**spect**ive
circum**spect**	**spec**imen	disre**spect**ful
	specialize	su**spic**ious
	speculate	au**spic**ious
	specify	con**spic**uous
	specific	de**spic**able

Week 11. **Check Yourself**

Answer the following questions. Use a separate piece of paper when you need more space.

1. The Greek word *graphein* meant "to write." From this word we get the roots *graph-* and *gram-*. You have already seen some words built in the root *graph-*. See if you can think of any others that were not listed earlier. Also see how many words you can find that are built on the root *gram-*. Remember that the root does not always appear at the beginning of the English words that are built on it.

2. Listed below are some words that are important in modern technology and science. If necessary use a dictionary to find out where these words came from and what their roots originally meant. Explain how the roots contribute to the modern meaning of each word. In some cases you may have to look up each root independently and put them together to form your own interpretation.

aeronautics ____

amphibious ____

asteroid ____

cryogenics ____

entomology ____

geophysics ____

paleontology ____

physiologist ____

supersonic ____

thermonuclear ____

Week 12

Take a Foreign Tour

Words from Other Languages

We have already seen a number of Latin and Greek words that contributed roots used in many English words. This week we will look at complete words that have been taken directly into English, sometimes with minor changes in spelling or pronunciation.

A. Latin Words

Many of the following words have been taken into English directly from Latin. Most of their original spellings and meanings have been retained, although a few have changed to some extent. When the Latin spelling differs from the modern English word, the original spelling is given in italics. When the meaning of the original word differs somewhat from the present meaning, it is shown in parentheses. Check yourself or work with a partner to see how many of these words you can use in a sentence.

abdomen
actor (anyone who does something or takes action)
animal
campus (any flat, open space)

census
color
credit (*credere*: to believe, entrust)
doctor (teacher)

error (a wandering about, wavering)
exit (*exitus*: going out)
favor
formula (shape, beauty, form)

genius (guardian spirit)
gladiator
honor
horror

index
instructor (supervisor, preparer)
major (larger, greater)
minor (smaller, less)

plus (more)
radius (stick; spoke in a wheel)
refrigerate (*refrigerare*: to cool off, chill)
senator

stadium (race track)
superior (higher, upper; past, preceding)
terror
video (literally "I see" - from *videre*, to see)

We still use the Latin term *vice versa* to mean "with the order reversed." We also use the Latin word *versus* (abbreviated *vs.*) to mean "against"; it originally meant "towards, in that direction."

……

Look up the following words in a dictionary designed for high-school or college students. After each English word write the original Latin word, which sometimes differs from the English spelling. Also write the original meaning of the Latin word.

calendar: ____________________

circus: ____________________

elevate: ____________________

fortune: ____________________

item: ____________________

prior: ____________________

vacuum: ____________________

Look up the Latin term *et cetera*. What does it mean?

Why is it incorrect to say "and et cetera?"

B. Greek Words

We have seen a number of Greek roots that provided the bases for many English words. A smaller number of Greek words have been taken directly into the English language, and even these have often undergone changes in spelling and pronunciation. Some of these changes were made when Greek words were adapted to the Latin language over 2000 years ago; others were made when these words were taken into English. Here are a few examples:

atomos (indivisible): atom
chorde (string): chord
gala (milk): galaxy ("Milky Way")
gramma (writing): grammar
polis (city, state): police, politics

Words that use the *ch* spelling for the /k/ sound often originated in Greek. The *ch* spelling was added when the words were adapted for the Latin language.

choir, mechanic, archive, architect, chemistry, monarch, technical, technology, archaic, chemistry

The Greek word *psyche* originally meant "breath, principle of life, soul." It forms the root for modern words such as *psychology*, *psychiatry*, *psychic*, and *psychosomatic*.

Singular nouns that end with *s* often originated in Greek and were taken into Latin before making their way into English:

politics, economics, statistics, genetics, physics

• •

Look up the following words in a dictionary designed for high-school or college students. After each English word, write the original Greek word and its meaning.

chaos: ________________________________

charisma: ________________________________

chasm: ________________________________

chlorine: ________________________________

chorus: ________________________________

• •

C. French Words

Many English words have been borrowed from French over the centuries, especially after the Duke of Normandy conquered the English in 1066 and became King William I of England.

The following words are found in both French and English. In many cases the spelling is the same, although pronunciation is different. When the French word has a different spelling, it is shown in parentheses. Can you use them?

NOTES

amateur
animal
attention
avenue

baton
boulevard
catalogue
certain

chandelier
clear (*clair*, light)
cruel
force

garage
gratitude
honor (*honneur*)
importance

NOTES

journal
justice
limousine
piece

possible
reason (*raison*)
reservoir
silhouette

soup (*soupe*)
table
taxi
technique

If you're not sure of some of these words, look them up in your dictionary and add them to your vocabulary notebook.

Look up the following words in a dictionary designed for high-school or college students. After each English word, write the French spelling. Also give the meaning of the French word if it differs from the English version. (Keep in mind that many French words originated in even older Latin words; some dictionaries may show only the original Latin words, not the French words derived from them.)

active: ______________________________

dinner: ______________________________

marriage: ______________________________

subtle: ______________________________

Conclusion

By looking at all the words presented this week, you can see why some of them are spelled in ways that may seem puzzling at first. Words such as *psychology* and *silhouette* are not "spelled the way they sound" in English simply because they originated in other languages and usually were not pronounced the way we pronounce them today. In fact, some spellings such as that found in *psychology* actually do represent the original pronunciation, because both the letters *p* and *s* were sounded in the Greek spoken more than 2000 years ago.

Week 12. **Check Yourself**

Answer the following questions. Use a separate piece of paper when you need more space.

You will need a dictionary designed for high-school or college students. It must show the etymology of words borrowed from other languages. Although dictionaries intended for high schools will give some etymologies, a collegiate dictionary is more likely to provide all the information you will need. (Etymology was explained in Week 9 in the section on Dictionaries.)

Here are some words taken from Latin, Greek, or French. Some of them are spelled in English just as they were spelled originally; others have changed over the centuries. Look up each word and find the language in which it originated. Also find as much information as you can about the original meaning of each word. Can you use these words?

English Word	**Other Language and Notes**
abundant	
allow	
amphitheater	
chef	
cinema	
constellation	
dentist	
diameter	
digit	
menu	
numeral	
program	
synthetic	
urban	

Keep Building Your Vocabulary

An Ongoing Process

A twelve-week program in vocabulary building is not an end in itself. Instead, it is only a beginning. The strategies presented in this book should encourage you to see the opportunities you have for expanding your vocabulary. By applying these strategies regularly, you will develop the habit of thinking about words and of shining the light of your curiosity on the world of words around you. To make this twelve-week effort pay off, you need to think of it as a way to expand opportunities for vocabulary development in the future. You are now alert to numerous ways in which you can pique your curiosity about words.

No matter how large your storehouse of words, you can always increase and refine your ability to communicate by focusing on some words and using them quickly and often.

Try to learn one new word each day. The teacher who introduces one new word each day actually turns that word into many other new words. As the class discusses a word and its uses, other words begin to enter the picture. You can do the same in your family and among your friends.

For example, one class found the word *galvanized* in a science text. Although this word had a technical meaning that related to a procedure for protecting metal, the students discovered other ways to use it and they also learned still more words as they examined the word *galvanized*:

> The dynamic speaker galvanized the thinking of his entire audience. They listened with rapt attention to his plea for action.

By looking at other ways to use *galvanized*, this class expanded its knowledge of that word and learned two others in the process: *rapt* and *plea*. The same thing will happen in your family as you ask questions about words, explore shades of meaning, and play with words for their power and beauty.

In all you do, remember that you are not simply trying to build your stack of words higher than your neighbor's. Instead, you are searching for ways to make life more comprehensible and to make it easier to communicate with others. Success in school and in future employment will be greatly enhanced by your ability to use words skillfully and effectively.

In order to make curiosity about words a natural part of your thinking, you can't stop with a single twelve-week effort. You want to make that curiosity a habitual part of your thinking. There are many ways to accomplish this: listen to vocabulary tapes; buy other books on vocabulary; go back through this book after waiting for a month or so.

Each week of this program presented a different strategy for learning about words. Some techniques were quite simple; others were more complex. The point here is not to give a list of words to define but to show how you can think about words in ways that make them more meaningful. You may even want to paste a copy of the table of contents from this book on your refrigerator as a reminder: Here are twelve ways to expand your vocabulary:

1. **Expand through synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms**
2. **Build through word structure—prefixes**
3. **Build through word structure—suffixes**
4. **Find related words**
5. **Gain meaning from context**
6. **Say exactly what you mean**
7. **Play the analogies game**
8. **Create word maps and webs**
9. **Search dictionaries and thesauruses**
10. **Learn through roots and affixes**
11. **Discover Latin and Greek word families**
12. **Take a foreign tour**

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